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THE INSTITUTE OF WORLD ECONOMY AND
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Working-Class Movement
in the Soviet Union

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The International Working-Class Movement

PROBLEMS
OF HISTORY
AND THEORY

In seven volumes

Introduction by Academician
B.N. PONOMAREV

PROGRESS PUBLISHERS

The International Working-Class Movement

PROBLEMS
OF HISTORY
AND THEORY

Volume 6

THE WORKING-CLASS MOVEMENT
IN THE DEVELOPED
CAPITALIST COUNTRIES
AFTER THE SECOND WORLD WAR
(1945-1979)



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Международное рабочее движение
Вопросы истории и теории
В СЕМИ ТОМАХ
Том шестой
РАБОЧЕЕ ДВИЖЕНИЕ РАЗВИТЫХ КАПИТАЛИСТИЧЕСКИХ СТРАН
ПОСЛЕ ВТОРОЙ МИРОВОЙ ВОЙНЫ (1945-1979)
На английском языке

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THE INTERNATIONAL WORKING-CLASS MOVEMENT

PROBLEMS OF HISTORY
AND THEORY

VOLUME 6

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The volume covers the problems of the development of the labour and democratic movements in the developed capitalist countries, traces the spread of the influence of Marxism the world over, shows the growing role played by the working class and its organisations, and describes the changes in their strategic and tactical guidelines. Special attention is devoted to the impact of the world socialist system and its policy of peaceful coexistence on the revolutionary and democratic movements in the developed capitalist countries.

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INTRODUCTION

The sixth volume of the present edition is devoted to the present stage of the international workers' movement which, having started after the Second World War, is unfolding today. This period has been marked by large-scale class battles and world-wide history-making transformations. This is a period when the struggle between capitalism and socialism, the system to supersede it, has acquired a new dimension. The working class has become the pivot of mankind's social life. The world socialist system has emerged and consolidated. Its increasing influence upon the course of history is a highlight of modern times.

The Great October Socialist Revolution, having cast away the shackles of imperialist domination, launched an irreversible process of limiting and reducing the sphere of action of capitalist laws, gave a powerful impetus to the peoples' struggle for their liberation and eliminated the bourgeoisie's monopoly of world politics. The emergence of the system of socialist states after the Second World War and its steadily growing might, reflected a further change in the balance of the two social systems' forces and turned into the principal factor in the aggravation of the general crisis of capitalism. One should be mindful of this factor in order to have a correct understanding of the changes that occurred in the international situation in the post-war decades, of the peculiarities of the workers' movement in capitalist countries, the processes by which ever new links in the chain of imperialist domination were broken and the course of the national liberation struggle. The second stage in the general crisis of capitalism which culminated in the consolidation of the world socialist system and the shrinkage of the domain of capitalist rule was followed since mid-1950s, by a third stage, ushered in by the strengthening of the positions of socialism. This stage provided new stimuli for profound social changes throughout the world.

In the early years of the Soviet state's history, a mere 7.8 per cent of the world population lived on the territories where the capitalist rule had been overthrown. In the mid-70s, the socialist countries accounted for one-third (32.1 per cent) of the globe's population. The socialist countries, CMEA members, currently account for nearly one-third of the world's industrial output. Socialism's growing strength and successes in the building of a new society conduce to the further proliferation of socialist ideas and enhance their attractiveness as the socialist future of the world's peoples can now be visualised in concrete forms and the working people can borrow valuable experience on which to rely in their struggle.

It is the country of victorious socialism that in the years of the Second World War saved mankind from the nazi barbarism and eliminated the horrendous threat to the gains of civilisation. The defeat of nazism, which removed the most dangerous enemies of peace and progress from the political arena, caused a realignment of forces in the imperialist camp, changing both the international contexts of the class struggle and the internal political climate in capitalist countries.

The Soviet Union has convincingly shown to each and all that the new principles the October Revolution introduced in mankind's life, specifically, in relations between nations, have acquired not only moral force but are also reliably supported by the economic, political and military might of the Soviet state and the monolithic unity of the Soviet people, the winner in the hard battle. The historical superiority of socialism has been unprecedentedly borne out by the Soviet Union's victory over the misanthropic nazi military establishment which embodied the worst evils of capitalism. For this reason, the years following the defeat of nazism were, naturally, marked by a tremendous upsurge in the workers' and democratic movement all over the world, by the growth of interest in and sympathy for the Soviet Union and the Communist parties, and by the new achievements gained by the working people in various areas of social life.

The subsequent post-war development has been continuously influenced by world socialism. The imperialists are compelled to take into account the bitter lessons of history and to give heed to the existence, strength and authority of the socialist countries. The attempts to "roll back" socialism or to paralyse it by acquiring monopoly of atomic weapons led, in the long run, to ever new setbacks suffered by the imperialist policy. Each of the political setbacks was conducive to the working-class successes.

The fact that the working people in European and many other countries have been able to live, work, and struggle in the condi-

tions of peace for four decades, can only be accounted for by the emergence and strengthening of the world socialist system, which diminished the effect of inherent capitalist laws and limited the sphere of their action.

It was Karl Marx who indicated the direction in which the working class might influence international relations. He pointed out that it ought "to vindicate the simple laws of morals and justice, which ought to govern the relations of private individuals, as the rules paramount of the intercourse of nations.

"The fight for such a foreign policy forms part of the general struggle for the emancipation of the working classes."¹

The community of socialist countries has opposed the imperialist foreign policy by an entirely new type of international relations, based on the Leninist principles of the peaceful coexistence of countries with different social systems, mutual respect for other countries' sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of one another, on mutually beneficial cooperation among equal states and on fraternal mutual assistance of the peoples fighting for their liberation, peace and social progress.

The continued change in the correlation of forces of the two opposed social systems, the weakening of imperialism's positions and the Soviet Union's achievement of military parity with the United States of America have opened up new prospects for a radical restructuring of international relations. It has been proved that world wars are not fatally unavoidable and prerequisites have been created to transfer from cold war by means of which imperialism tried, for many post-war years, to check the onslaught of the forces of social progress to international detente and peaceful coexistence among countries with different social systems.

As was stressed in the report of the CC CPSU to the 26th CPSU Congress (1981), "it is absolutely obvious that today the Soviet Union and its allies are more than ever the chief buttress of world peace".²

Thus, real socialism again, this time in the conditions of peace, has proved itself to be a consistently internationalist force making a decisive contribution to the creation of an international context propitious to the struggle for social progress.

While the cold war contained the workers' and democratic movement in capitalist countries, distracting the masses from the urgent problems and making it possible for the reactionary forces to play

¹ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. Two, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1976, p. 18.

² *Documents and Resolutions. The 26th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, Novosty Press Agency Publishing House, Moscow, 1981, p. 7.

up on nationalist and anti-communist prejudices, in the conditions of detente the workers' and democratic movement became far less limited and much more vigorous in its efforts. The improvement of the international situation helped the working people in capitalist countries to learn more about the realities of the socialist world, to peel the cold war propaganda paint off the true image of socialism and to have a clearer view of the perspectives opened up by far-reaching social transformations. The collapse of the surviving fascist regimes in Western Europe, the defeat suffered by the overt reactionary forces in the FRG, Italy and elsewhere, the leftward shift of the masses in the majority of West European countries and a great upsurge in the democratic movement in the United States—all these events of the late 1960s and 1970s would have hardly been possible in a context of acute international tensions. The Conference of the Communist and Workers' Parties of Europe held in 1976 had every reason to state that peaceful coexistence had created "more favourable conditions of struggle for the movements for democratic and socialist transformation in the capitalist countries".¹

A fresh aggravation of the international situation caused by the machinations of the imperialist circles of the United States and other countries at the turn of the 1980s calls for the concerted action of the entire international working class and all the peace-loving forces and sets the workers' movement new, highly responsible tasks. It is vitally important to strive for the further consolidation of the positions of the working class as a class which has the greatest stake in preserving peace.

In the last few decades the issue of the interrelationship between the struggle for peace and the struggle for social progress has become one of the main problems of the international labour movement. The Communists as front-rank working-class fighters have always opposed war as a means of resolving international problems. At the same time, the world wars unleashed by the imperialists, by seriously precipitating world-wide revolutionary crises, diminished imperialism's role in world development and conduced to radical changes in the international situation. The new alignment of forces in the international arena and the development of weapons of mass destruction have had a serious effect on the situation.

The struggle to avert the war danger and ensure peaceful coexistence has turned into a categorical imperative not only for the work towards social progress, but also for mankind's very existence. The horrendous idea about the need to force revolution at the

¹ *For Peace, Security, Cooperation and Social Progress in Europe. Berlin, June 29-30, 1976*, Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, Moscow, 1976, p. 40.

cost of the lives of half of mankind has been repudiated by the international workers' movement. At the same time, the tremendous growth of socialism and democracy and the weakening of the imperialist camp have considerably broadened the possibilities of struggle for social progress in the context of peace. The grave socio-political crises ravaging the capitalist world and the popular anti-imperialist revolutions of the 1960s-1970s unfolded against the background of reduced international tensions.

A far more concrete, everyday influence exerted by the realities of socialism triumphant in a considerable part of the world had become a decisive factor in creating more propitious conditions for the working-class struggle as compared to those obtaining in the period between the two world wars. The new society's successes and social gains have determined the scope, the goals and the methods of the working-class struggle. The 25th CPSU Congress stressed that "already today socialism exercises a tremendous influence on the thinking and sentiment of hundreds of millions of people all over the world. It assures working people freedom, truly democratic rights, well-being, the broadest possible access to knowledge, and a firm sense of security. It brings peace, respect for the sovereignty of all countries and equal interstate co-operation, and is a pillar of support to peoples fighting for their freedom and independence."¹

Fear of the revolutionising effect of the socialist example has been "a second nature" of the monopolistic ruling circles since the time of the Great October Socialist Revolution. Yet, never before have they been compelled to make equally serious concessions in an effort to forestall this revolutionising effect. The confrontation with socialism has played a top-priority role in the strategy and everyday policy of the monopolistic bourgeoisie. In the face of the social achievements gained by the working people in the Soviet Union and other countries of victorious socialism and under the growing pressure of the workers' movement the ruling classes in the developed capitalist countries were forced to retreat, step by step, from their positions and abandon some of the most brutal forms of exploitation.

The working people in capitalist countries do not fail to compare the situation at home, where "full employment" remains a myth, while the spectre of unemployment haunts the working-class quarters even in the years of economic boom, with the constantly growing demand for labour force in the socialist countries. Similarly, the free access to education and science, large-scale housing construction, and a tremendous growth in the medical services network

¹ *Documents and Resolutions. 25th Congress of the CPSU.* Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, Moscow, 1976, p. 13.

typical of socialist society stimulate the working people in capitalist countries to urge the solution of the acute social problems facing them.

Never before has the working class scored such important material gains. The broad masses started to regard a steady rise in their living standard as their inalienable right. In this, they are largely motivated by the very existence of socialism and by the historic competition between the two social systems. As a result of many years of struggle the working class has started to enjoy greater possibilities to organise itself, defend its interests, set itself more serious, far-reaching goals than mere subsistence and a higher living standard.

Broad social and economic demands, i.e. intermediate goals stimulating the working class in its advancement, enhancing its influence on political life in the period prior to overthrowing the capitalist rule and in rallying around itself non-proletarian, middle strata of the population, has started to play, especially since the 1970s, an important role in the workers' movement.

It goes without saying that the monopolistic bourgeoisie have learned much from the struggle between the two opposed social systems. The strategy and tactics of the dominant class have modified and become more sophisticated as compared to the pre-war period as a result of the defeat of fascism, the consolidation of the forces of socialism and the accelerated transformation of monopoly capitalism into state-monopoly capitalism. The bourgeoisie have relied more on combining direct pressure with "integrating" the working class in the state-monopoly capitalist establishment skilfully camouflaged by democratic phraseology. And they seek to impart a reformist and socio-demagogic character to bourgeois ideology and politics. The ruling circles use all available means to make state-monopoly capitalism look a dynamic, constantly developing society where technological and economic progress ostensibly entails social advancement, alleviates the acute social problems and thereby renders programmes of revolutionary transformation meaningless.

Not infrequently, such tactics considerably has impeded the development of the working class' socio-political consciousness and set limits to the influence of the working people's consistently revolutionary vanguard. However, while ensuring temporary advantages for the dominant class, this tactics has exacerbated capitalism's internal contradictions and laid a larger stage for the popular masses' long-term struggle against it. This is testified to by the events of the late 60s and the 70s, when the aggravation of social problems facing the capitalist countries and, subsequently, the economic crisis and the ensuing economic disturbances and the growth of the threat of war provided fresh, more convincing evidence of the incorrigible

nature of capitalism and stimulated the upsurge of massive democratic movements.

Powerful blows have been dealt at imperialism both by the international working class and the national liberation movement. That the consolidation of the forces of socialism created broader possibilities for the class and the national liberation struggles has been vividly shown by the heroic struggle waged by revolutionary Vietnam, whose people succeeded, thanks to the all-round support of the socialist countries and the active solidarity of the working people throughout the world, in countering and, eventually, gaining a victory over the mightiest capitalist countries. The formation of the socialist system was accompanied by further big successes in the peoples' struggle to liberate themselves from the colonial yoke. Imperialism was forced to change its tactics and to grant independence to oppressed nations. The collapse of the colonial system of imperialism resulted in the emergence of nearly one hundred independent states. For their part, the peoples now free from colonial oppression and engaged in independent history-making have contributed to the struggle against imperialism, for peace and social progress. This is especially true of those newly-free countries which have opted for a socialist orientation. Lenin's forecast about the historic role to be played by the national liberation movement of the imperialist colonies and semi-colonies in the development of world revolution has proved to be correct. Characteristically, in the post-war period the national liberation movement has played this role at a new, state level. This has enhanced its importance in international politics, and, at the same time, given rise to new problems.

Consistent democrats, advanced workers in imperialist countries have contributed to the successes scored by the peoples of Asian, African, and Latin American countries in the post-war period. The powerful campaigns of solidarity with Vietnam, Cuba and the fighters for the independence of peoples in South Africa, launched in many capitalist countries in defiance of chauvinist and anti-communist campaigns, conduced to the liberation struggle and stimulated the development of the proletariat's class and internationalist consciousness. A whole generation of fighters for social progress has grown under the favourable effect of these movements.

The post-war period has been highlighted by a closer interaction among the chief motive forces of social development—world socialism, the labour and communist movements, the peoples of the newly-free countries, and the mass democratic movements. The struggles waged by working peoples in various countries merge into the peoples' joint battle against imperialism. The best hopes of mankind's progressive forces are embodied in the labour movement.

The objective need for the further strengthening of this interac-

tion, for bringing down all the barriers hampering the establishment of a closer link between the various trends of anti-imperialist struggle heightens the importance of proletarian internationalism and the militant solidarity of the fighting peoples. As Lenin put it, "Capital is an international force. To vanquish it, an international workers' alliance, an international workers' brotherhood, is needed."¹ This is especially true today, when in none of the countries the revolutionary movement is in a position to develop as an isolated phenomenon and its success depends on the situation on the other fronts of the liberation struggle. Any retreat from the principles of international solidarity, the attempts to elaborate the working-class movement's strategy and tactics without taking into account the experience of the victorious revolutions and the vast experience accumulated in socialist countries as well as the attempts to oppose various contingents of the working class to one another can only lead to an impasse. The experience of the post-war decades has shown that such attempts are fraught with the danger of grave setbacks. This understanding gives special force to the world-wide appeal issued by the participants in the international communist forum, held in Moscow in June 1969: "*Peoples of the socialist countries, workers, democratic forces in the capitalist countries, newly liberated peoples and those who are oppressed, unite in a common struggle against imperialism, for peace, national liberation, social progress, democracy and socialism!*"²

The need for the solidarity and interaction of all the anti-imperialist, democratic forces is dictated not only by the objective factors of the internationalisation of the revolutionary process, but also by the necessity to foil the enemy's incidious plans.

In spite of the serious weakening of its positions in the second half of the 20th century, the capitalist class has retained control of considerable reserves. Among them is the material wealth accumulated throughout the centuries of exploiting the working people, the possibility of using in their selfish interest the achievements of the scientific and technological progress, high concentration of economic power in the hands of transnational companies, and the coalescence of the forces of the monopolies and the bourgeois state. Among the reserves the capitalists can rely on is the ignorance and prejudices of the backward groups of the population, the contradictions arising in the course of revolutionary movements, and, finally,

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1974, p. 293 (here and hereafter Progress Publishers, Moscow).

² *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow, 1969*, Peace and Socialism Publishers, Prague, 1969, p. 39.

the rallying of the international capitalist forces which, after the Second World War, has attained an unprecedented scope due to the setting up of the NATO and other aggressive blocs, the economic and political integration of Western Europe, the interventionist activity of the CIA, and of other mechanisms of imperialist interference.

Political manoeuvring the imperialist circles resorted to in a bid to cause a split in the forces opposing them has become especially intensive. The disruption of all the attempts to drive a wedge between the countries of socialism and the revolutionary forces elsewhere in the world is a most important prerequisite for the further advancement of the labour movement.

Naturally, the most incidious manoeuvring of the class enemy and the large-scale utilisation of the poisoned weapon of anti-communism have failed to check the course of history. This is vividly testified to by the post-war developments. The struggle waged by the international working class and the changes in the balance of the two systems' forces brought into increasingly sharp focus the internal contradictions and moribund state of capitalism and precipitated its crisis. In the 1970s, the bourgeois society entered a stage of serious disruptions, which revealed the untenability of the existing forms of state-monopoly regulation. The growing economic instability of capitalism combined with the growing socio-political instability. The working people became increasingly displeased with their position, the masses were discontent and demanded change. The working-class struggle increasingly tended to concentrate on the key issues of the socio-political structure and state policy.

It stands to reason that the economic disturbances and acute socio-political crises characteristic of the present historical period cannot revolutionise the consciousness of the masses automatically. This understanding makes it much more important for the Communists to concentrate on elucidating the deep-rooted causes of economic and social privations of the working people, on elaborating a democratic alternative to the state-monopoly policy, an alternative promoting the interest of the broad masses of the population, and on fighting for its implementation.

Relying on the knowledge of the general laws governing the revolutionary process and discovered by Marxism-Leninism, and proceeding from an analysis of the new conditions and tasks of the struggle for peace, democracy and social progress made by the international communist movement, the Communist parties have made every effort to formulate a clear-cut and constructive answer to the questions posed by the times, an answer that takes into account the specific features of each country or of each socio-political situa-

tion. Today, as never before, a correct correlation of the general and the specific, the national and the international elements in the struggle of the working class is an important prerequisite for the true success of the progressive forces. The elaboration of a scientifically substantiated stand on the issues of the political alliances to be formed by the working class, on the economic policy to be pursued by the Left and aimed at finding a democratic way out of the crisis in compliance with the interests of the masses, on the concrete ways to achieve socialist transformation of the state and social structure, and on the ideological education of the masses is called upon to safeguard the vital interests of the working class, of the entire society in the course of its development and the whole of mankind.

Alternative democratic programmes elaborated by Communist parties reflect the complexity and variety of the situations in which the working class has to wage its struggle. The Communists' creative approach to the implementation of the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism is a guarantee of their overcoming all the difficulties on their way towards the ultimate goal.

Advancing along this road, the labour movement relies on the best achievements mankind has gained throughout its history. Socialism embodies people's basic aspirations and it is alone in a position to cope with the global problems which are facing mankind and which have been growing in their importance with the development of the scientific and technological revolution. The very existence of the human race depends on whether or not these problems are resolved. Forestalling a new world war, satisfying the needs of the world's growing population, overcoming the developing countries' backwardness, maintaining the planet's geographical and ecological balance are all problems which cannot be solved under capitalism. A new civilisation, one worthy of man, can emerge only as a result of completing the great revolutionary process whose development constitutes the content of the present era, the era of transition from capitalism to socialism and the historical competition of the two socio-political systems.

* * *

In contrast to the previous volumes of the present edition, the sixth volume is devoted to the analysis of the labour movement in the developed capitalist countries alone. The problems of the working class, the workers' movements in socialist and developing countries and the international communist movement will be considered in the subsequent volumes. This structure has been determined by the peculiarities of the historical period that started after the end

of the Second World War, namely, by the tremendous growth in the scale of the historic activity of the international labour movement and the increasing volume and variety of tasks facing its various contingents.

Having broken from the world capitalist system, a number of countries started to build a socialist society. This process takes on various forms, depending on the conditions obtaining in each country. The disintegration of imperialism's colonial system and the upsurge in the national liberation movement have heightened the socio-political role played by the labour movement in the countries of Latin America, Asia, and Africa and have largely modified and complicated the nature of these countries' development. It is important to reveal the specific character of each of the main contingents of the international workers' movement in a new historical context and to analyse the development of each of them in all its variety. Such an approach makes it possible to understand the system of ties ensuring the development of the international labour movement as a single whole and the international unity objectively inherent in this movement.

The principal tendencies in the evolution of the working-class movement in capitalist countries reflect the dominant features and regularities of the modern epoch. In the capitalist world, says the Party Programme, adopted by the 27th CPSU Congress, the working class is "the main force struggling for the overthrow of the exploiting system and for building a new society".

The labour movement originated in the "old" capitalist countries. It is here that the movement made its first steps, developed into a major social force and was equipped with a scientifically substantiated revolutionary theory. It is by its principles that the fighters for socialism throughout the world are guided today. The labour movement in these countries struggles against the most developed and sophisticated system of capitalist exploitation and opposes capitalist domination in those vital centres of capitalism where its principal reserves are concentrated. It is impossible to eliminate capitalism as a social system without doing away with capitalist domination in these centres.

The variety of factors determining the conditions in which working class lives and struggles, the differences in the situations obtaining in various countries and regions, and the emergence of different internal and international factors determine the uneven and variously directed development of the labour movement. The authors of this volume regard it their task to reveal the main, determinative tendencies behind the complexity and contradictions of the historical dynamics of the labour movement. The understanding of these tendencies and of the way they manifest themselves in

different national and regional conditions is important for the assessment of the general and the specific aspects of the working-class struggle and the objectively international character of this struggle.

This understanding is also important in advocating the Marxist-Leninist conception of the working class' leading role in the revolutionary transformations taking place in the world. In the last few decades the actual difficulties and problems faced by the revolutionary process in capitalist countries have been actively played up by the opponents of Marxism-Leninism and by revisionists of various hues in their criticism of this conception. Both bourgeois sociologists and proponents of ultra-left theories talk much about the working class in capitalist countries "turning bourgeois", being disintegrated and forfeiting its independent historical role and revolutionary potential. Such theories have been comprehensively analysed and criticised in Soviet literature;¹ the study of the actual development of the labour movement, its tendencies and regularities is especially instrumental in disproving them.

In the 40s-80s, the CPSU and the fraternal Communist parties did a lot to give a theoretical interpretation to the new problems and the new experience of the international labour movement. Their assessments and conclusions provide a reliable methodological basis for investigating the problems dealt with in the present volume. A most detailed analysis of the highlights of the present stage of the world revolutionary process and the specific features of the labour movement in capitalist countries is to be found in the materials of the CPSU congresses and the new edition of the Party Programme adopted by the 27th Congress and in the documents of the international meetings and conferences of Communist and Workers' parties. In their analysis the authors of this volume have relied on these and other documents of the CPSU and the international communist movement.

The problems of the capitalist countries' economic and political development in the post-war period and the questions of the communist, labour, and democratic movements have been extensively studied by Soviet² and foreign Marxist scholars. The authors of the present volume have made maximum use of the data and findings provided by their research.

¹ See, for instance, *Modern Capitalism and the Working Class: A Critique of Anti-Marxist Concepts*, Moscow, 1976 (in Russian).

² A comprehensive analysis of the Soviet historiography of the labour movement in the developed countries in the latter half of the 50s-70s was made in the book by B. I. Rasputnis, *The Soviet Historiography of the Modern Labour Movement*, Part 1 and 2, Lvov, 1976, and 1980 (in Russian).

The structure of the present volume differs from that of the previous volumes. The contemporary history of the labour movement as it is unfolding before our eyes constitutes despite the attention Soviet and foreign researchers have devoted to it, the least studied period of the labour movement. This is accounted for by the unprecedented scope of the revolutionary process which has today acquired a truly global character, the emergence of ever new sources of research, and the accumulation of the movement's vast experience. The latter elucidates those phenomena and processes of the recent past in which today's developments are rooted. Among the subjects that call for careful examination are the serious changes that have occurred over the last few decades in the social structure of capitalist society, the changes in the composition of the working class, in its objective situation and conditions of struggle, in the volume and nature of its gains, in the level of its consciousness, in the balance of forces within the labour movement and in the strategy and tactics of its vanguard.

All this accounts for the combination of two approaches in the present volume: a regional-historical approach aimed at tracing the process of the consistent development of the labour movement in developed capitalist countries and a problem-oriented approach aimed at a goal-oriented analysis of the prerequisites for and conditions of the historical process, its individual factors and aspects. Wherever possible, the two approaches were combined within a chapter or a section. However, it was found to be more expedient to single out major problems and treat them as independent structural units. This primarily concerns the analysis of the changes in the international and national contexts of the working-class struggle, the changes in the working-class structure, position and consciousness, as well as the study of the history of strikes and the trade union movement and interrelationship between the principal trends in the international labour movement.

By applying the Leninist approach to the study of the history of the labour movement, the authors of the present volume have sought to elucidate the interaction between the objective and the subjective factors, the mass struggle and the mass consciousness of the workers on the one hand, and the policy and ideology of the working-class organisations, on the other. This accounts for the considerable attention given in this volume to the activity of the Communist parties.¹ The period under consideration is highlighted by

¹ An integral analysis of the activity of the international communist movement, the theory, strategy and tactics of the revolutionary struggle is contained in the final volume of the present edition. For this reason, these problems are not considered in detail in this volume.

the development of the communist movement in capitalist countries and the growing influence it exerts on the political life. In a number of countries, Communist parties play the leading role in the struggle waged by the working class and its allies and in resolving the problems facing the labour movement in the new historical context. The Communists should be merited on the theoretical elaboration of the strategy and tactics of the proletariat's revolutionary struggle and on the development of its class consciousness. The theoretical and practical activity of the Communist parties is inseparable from the labour movement as it constitutes its important integral part.

Today, the international labour movement is inconceivable without the vanguard role of the Communists. Heroically fighting nazism in the front ranks of all the democratic and patriotic forces, upholding, in the most difficult years of the cold war, the internationalist principles of the labour movement, defending the working people's interests, consolidating the ranks of the fighters against the monopolies and reaction and displaying tenacity, flexibility and creative potential in blazing the trail of the revolutionary struggle, the Communists have written down glorious pages in modern history. As was pointed out in the materials of the 26th CPSU Congress, "despite terror and persecution, despite prison and the barbed wire of concentration camps, in selfless and often very difficult everyday work for the good of the peoples, Communists in the capitalist countries remain loyal to the ideals of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism".¹

Four decades constitute a comparatively short period in terms of the entire epoch. Not all the tasks the objective social development set the labour movement could be resolved within this period. The history of the labour movement is a complicated, uneven and contradictory process, in which successes are combined with temporary setbacks. However, for all the obstacles and zigzagging on the road to the ultimate goal, the working class has made another tremendous leap forward, making the hour of the final victory draw closer. The reliance on the vast experience accumulated in this period provides the world's labour movement with a powerful stimulus for further struggle.

¹ *Documents and Resolutions. The 26th Congress of the CPSU*, p. 26.

Part One

**THE LABOUR MOVEMENT
IN CAPITALIST COUNTRIES
IN THE EARLY POST-WAR YEARS (1945-1955)**

Chapter 1

THE OUTCOME OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR AND THE LABOUR MOVEMENT IN DEVELOPED CAPITALIST COUNTRIES (1945-1947)

A NEW INTERNATIONAL SITUATION AND PROSPECTS FOR THE WORKING-CLASS STRUGGLE

The crushing defeat of nazism in 1945 was the historic victory of all the forces of democracy and progress headed by the Soviet Union.

The war itself and the way it ended brought about enormous changes in the international scene, altering the balance of world forces—those of democracy, progress and socialism, on the one hand, and those of reaction and imperialism, on the other—and signalling the beginning of a second stage in the general crisis of capitalism. The events of the war and post-war years gave a fresh impetus to the world-wide revolutionary process. The victory won by the anti-nazi coalition in which the Soviet Union constituted the decisive force, created conditions conducive for the development of the anti-fascist and national liberation struggles into people's democratic and socialist revolutions in a number of countries in Central and South-East Europe and Asia. The early post-war years also witnessed an abrupt change in the internal political situation prevailing in developed capitalist, colonial and semi-dependent countries.

Foiled were the imperialist circles' hopes for the Soviet Union being routed or considerably weakened in the war. Contrary to their expectations, the progress of war proved that the socialist economy had enormous advantages over the capitalist economy. In the trying circumstances of war, it took the Soviet Union only a few months to put its industry on a war footing. The Soviet people was able to gain a history-making victory in the Great Patriotic War by relying on a powerful socialist economy created in the course of the first five-year-plan periods. The Soviet people's ability to meet the challenge of formidable trials testified, yet again, to Lenin's foresight, "a nation in which the majority of the workers and peasants realise, feel and see that they are fighting for their own Soviet power . . . such a nation can never be vanquished".¹

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, 1977, p. 319.

The Second World War ended in the crushing defeat and elimination of the fascist regimes in Germany and in Italy; Japanese militarism was routed, too. Thus, the mightiest coalition of the most aggressive imperialist powers, the strike force of imperialism, so to speak, proved incapable of shattering socialism.

The Soviet people's victory, its contribution to the struggle against fascism heightened the Soviet Union's authority and political influence in the international scene. The Red Army's performance on battlefield and the co-operation of the anti-Hitler coalition powers made millions of people throughout the world aware of the potentialities of socialism and of the true—humane and peaceable—content of Soviet foreign policy.

The capitalist system emerged from the war sharply weakened. Economic consequences of the Second World War for imperialism, above all, for the leading imperialist powers, were determined by the scope of the war and by its enhancing and precipitating effect on the unevenness of the economic and political development of individual countries, inherent in capitalism. The successes initially scored by Hitler's Germany in the West European theatre of war resulted in the severance of economic ties that once connected the occupied countries (for instance, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark and Norway) with one another and with the rest of the world and in the adaptation of their economies to the military and economic needs of the aggressor. The economy of the Axis powers, lop-sidedly orientated towards meeting war needs, became deformed likewise. Economic potentials were undermined by staggering military spendings and the enormous devastation caused by the war.

Those of the capitalist states which did not find themselves under the aggressor's heel—among them, the United States, Sweden, Canada, and Australia—took advantage of the war-time situation to consolidate their economic positions in the world, oust or put pressure to bear on their main rivals. This policy was especially characteristic of the United States of America which expected to take the place the old European imperialist powers used to occupy in the world. This was to be achieved by economic and political means, i.e. by ousting the Old World powers, weakened by the war, from their former spheres of influence and by saddling them with such forms of post-war peaceful settlement that would further US interests in the first place. These expectations have largely come true.

Among the important consequences of the Second World War were broader possibilities of developing a large-scale and incomparably better organised national liberation movement. It is in the course of the war and in the early post-war years that the stage was laid for the process which in the 50s and especially in the 60s led

to the emergence of nearly one hundred new states, equal and active members of the international community.

The pre-war and war years witnessed the unfolding of one of the most powerful popular movements of the period in question: the anti-imperialist, national liberation struggle of the Chinese people. Its eventual success was largely promoted by the Soviet Union's victory over militarist Japan. The years of 1945 and 1946 witnessed North Korea breaking off with capitalism. On September 2, 1945, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam was proclaimed. On October 12, 1945 Laos was declared independent. The Kampuchean people, too, mounted an armed struggle for liberation.

The attempts to restore the former order of things in the colonies whose population had taken part in military operations invariably met with its growing resistance and, not infrequently, armed counter-action. This was the case in India, Burma, Malaya and the Philippines. In 1945, Indonesia's and in 1947, India's independence were proclaimed. Protests against colonialism, as well as against indigenous forces of tyranny, swept almost the whole of the Middle East.

A particularly important contribution to the post-war anti-imperialist, national liberation movement was made by those peoples and countries where the working class, headed by the Communists, acted as its leader and most active force—Central and South-East Europe, China, North Korea and Vietnam. The fact that Communist parties had a leading role to play in these countries had a profound effect on the character and social content of the national liberation movement and accounted for the most significant revolutionary gains won in the entire area of imperialism's colonial periphery. Of great importance was also the fact that the Soviet Union, a socialist state, had a decisive role to play in determining the outcome of the Second World War and laying the foundations of the post-war world.

The military, economic and political results of the Second World War, the new alignment of the world's class forces in the early post-war years, the serious weakening of the forces of imperialism and reaction in practically all areas and the expansion of the national liberation movement created favourable conditions for the growth of the labour and general democratic movements in capitalist countries. These conditions were further consolidated by the movements in question. In the countries which had experienced fascist dictatorships or occupation, a considerable part of the bourgeoisie and its spokesmen in the upper echelons of political parties and state machinery were discredited by their collaboration with the nazis. The collapse of the fascist regimes in these countries created, for a certain period, a peculiar situation marked by the rejection of some

of the customary practices in managing the capitalist economy, by the sharp weakening of the political influence of traditional bourgeois parties and mass organisations and by the discomfiture of the ruling circles which feverishly looked for new allies, new orientations and new means of retaining their domination.

Thus, in Germany, the rout of nazism and the collapse of the nazi Reich signified not only economic dislocation and the breakdown of the nazi party, army, state and coercion mechanisms, but also the defeat of the monopoly groups of Alfred Krupp, Friedrich Flick, Hugo Stinnes and others who had given their blessing to Hitler's coming to power. As a result of the downfall of the Mussolini regime the Marinotti, Cini, Donegani and other monopoly groups forfeited their influence on Italy's policy and economy. The monarchist and fascist organisations and the financial monopoly clique were abolished in Japan. Completely discredited were the monopolists, bankers and bourgeois politicians who collaborated with the invaders in France, Belgium, Denmark, Norway and other European countries temporarily ruled by the nazis.

The Resistance movement that emerged in the occupied European countries during the war united various democratic forces. Objectively, the movement set itself—and solved—not only the task of fighting nazism, but also the far-reaching task of social emancipation of the working people. In many countries, the Resistance movement grew into people's democratic or national liberation revolutions. Everywhere without exception, the working class was in the vanguard of the movement. After the war, its participants acted as a united force urging democratic transformations.

Communist parties had a special role to play in the Resistance movement and in the post-war activity of the democratic and anti-imperialist forces in capitalist countries. Despite the fact that in practically all European countries the Communists suffered the greatest losses in the struggle against fascism not only did they preserve their organisation intact, but they consolidated it and gained a higher prestige among the masses. Whereas before the war, in 1939, there were in the world 61 Communist parties with a membership of four million people, including 1.5 million in capitalist countries, in 1947, these figures grew to 76, to 20 million and 4.8 million,¹ respectively. The emergence of the Communist parties from the underground after the war and the enormous growth of their authority, especially dramatic against the background of the shrinking prestige of the bourgeois parties, multiplied the possibilities open to the anti-monopoly forces. The victory over fascism

¹ *International Relations After the Second World War*, Vol. 1, p. 73 (in Russian).

and the end of the war, regarded as history-making events, instilled great hopes in the masses and caused a democratic upsurge which to various degrees engulfed all the capitalist countries. The upsurge was stimulated by the aspiration for a better future, social justice and the working people's guaranteed rights.

The positions gained by the summer of 1945 by the French working class, which had played an important role in liberating the country and restoring its independence, were incomparable even to those it enjoyed at the time of the Popular Front. The workers' revolutionary vanguard, the Communist Party, numbered more than 900,000 members. At the October 1945 elections to the Constituent Assembly, the French Communist Party won more than 5 million votes (26 per cent of all the votes cast) and thus proved to be the country's strongest political party.

The Italian working class and its organisations made a weighty contribution to the liberation of their country. Nearly 142,000 out of 224,000 guerrillas were members of the Communist-led Garibaldi detachments.¹ Luigi Longo, a prominent figure in the Italian Communist Party, was among the leaders of the Freedom Volunteers Corps (guerrilla forces). It was only natural that the Italian Communist Party, the only political force which had not ceased to fight, fascism in the underground conditions and which following the victory led the people in its struggle for a new, democratic Italy, gained tremendous authority. As early as 1945, the Italian Communist Party had a membership of 1.7 million.² At the 1946 elections to the Constituent Assembly it won 19 per cent of the votes (as against 4.7 per cent in 1921, prior to the fascists' coming to power).³

In the western zones of Germany, the Communists, who did not give up struggle even in the hardest years of the war, began to restore, under the leadership of the CPG Central Committee, their organisations. The effort was launched in the summer of 1945; by the autumn of the same year grass-roots, regional and zonal communist organisations were set up. From the outset, they played a significant role in the country's political and social life. In the spring of 1946, there were 205,000 Communists in the western zones of Germany.⁴

As soon as they were released from prisons, the Japanese Communists, too, began to restore their organisations. As early as December 1945, they held their first post-war congress.

¹ *History of Italy*, Vol. 3, Moscow, 1971, p. 226 (in Russian).

² *Ibid.*, p. 238.

³ N. P. Komolova, *The Resistance Movement and the Political Struggle in Italy*, Moscow, 1972, p. 351 (in Russian).

⁴ V. P. Iyerusalimsky, *The Years of Struggle and Maturing*, Moscow, 1970, p. 127 (in Russian).

Some of the Communist parties acquired a mass character. For instance, the membership of the Communist Party of Belgium exceeded 70,000. The Communist Party of Finland, which came out of the underground only in 1944, numbered 15,000 members by the summer of 1945. The Finnish People's Democratic League, which united the Communists, part of the left-wing Social Democrats and other progressive public figures and organisations on the platform of common struggle for democratic transformation, had a membership of 40,000 and gained 24 per cent of votes at the first post-war parliamentary elections. Some 12.5 per cent of the voters supported the Communists at the elections to the Danish Folketing (Parliament) held in the autumn of 1945. At the elections to the Storting, the Norwegian Communists gained 12 per cent of the votes. More than 500,000 people voted for the Communists at the July 1946 elections in the Netherlands. They received 10 seats in parliament (as against three seats before the war). A second Communist was elected to British Parliament in 1945. Even in Sweden, which remained neutral during the war, the number of voters supporting the Communists at the 1944 and 1946 elections grew 3 to 3.5 times as against 1940.

As for the Communist Party of the United States, it was in no position to boast comparable successes. The Browder group at the helm of the Party took a liquidationist stand. They played on the fact that the Soviet Union and the Western capitalist countries had been allies in the war in a bid to put the Party on the platform of class collaboration. Banking on the situation prevailing in the United States, the Browder group tried to prove that it was possible to establish a class peace and attain harmony between labour and capital. They claimed that it was not impossible to transform US capitalism into "progressive" capitalism. In 1942, Browder advanced the motto of "national unity" and called on the workers to join the monopolists' effort to achieve an early victory in the war. In 1944, on the initiative of the Browder group, the Party was replaced by an amorphous Communist Political Association.

In this period, there was no force in the Party's leadership strong enough to counter this liquidationist trend and oppose the theoretically erroneous and politically dangerous policy. Browderism, which eventually degenerated into an overt apologia of US imperialism, did great harm to the Communist Party of the USA. Its membership shrunk and the Communists' positions in the labour unions, as well as their influence at the grass-root level, were considerably weakened.¹

¹ W. Z. Foster, "The Struggle Against Revisionism", *Political Affairs*, No. 9, 1945, pp. 782-799; W. Z. Foster, "Leninism and Some Practical Problems of the Postwar Period", *Political Affairs*, No. 2, 1946, pp. 108-109.

In this context, the Party's Marxist-Leninist nucleus which opposed Browder's right-wing opportunist policy decided to prepare for and convene the 13th (extraordinary) Convention of the CP USA. The Convention was held in the summer of 1945. On the initiative of William Foster and Eugene Dennis, a decision was taken to restore the Communist Party. Having exposed Browderism at their Convention, the US Communists did a lot to overcome the acute ideological and organisational crisis ravaging their Party and thereby proved their loyalty to Marxism-Leninism.

On the whole, in the early post-war years the communist movement in developed capitalist countries grew stronger politically and organisationally. The Communists turned into a major national force in many countries. They were able to exert noticeable influence on political life in other countries and acted as a revolutionary vanguard everywhere. As the initiators of far-reaching democratic changes, they urged consistent and complete solution of democratic tasks, regarding this as part of the struggle for socialism and as a way of bringing the masses closer to socialist revolution. In 1947, the number of Communists in the developed capitalist countries reached 3.5 million, i.e. more than doubled as against the 1939 level. Nearly 14 million voters supported the Communists.

The same period saw the restoration of Social Democratic parties. They, too, enjoyed a growth in membership. In 1945, the French and the Italian Socialist parties numbered 300,000 and 700,000 members, respectively. As for the German Social Democrats, it took them a longer time to restore their party, completely crushed by the nazis.

The British Labour Party was the strongest and the most influential organisation in the Social Democratic movement. Britain did not have to experience the trials of the clandestine anti-nazi struggle which in Europe brought about a change in the balance of forces within the workers' movement in favour of the Communists. Therefore, in Britain the post-war democratic upsurge was reflected in the growth of the Labour Party's influence. The Party had a membership of 3,000,000¹ and was supported by the British Trades Union Congress which united 6.7 out of 7.8 million trade unionists.² The Labourites had close ties with the highly influential co-operative movement. The activity of the Labour Party, the BTUC and the Co-operative Union was co-ordinated by the National Labour Council. At the elections held in the summer of 1945, 12 million voters (48.5 per cent) supported the Labourites and secured for them 62 per cent of parliamentary seats.

¹ *Report of the Seventy-First Annual Conference of the Labour Party, Blackpool, 1972*, London, 1972, p. 60.

² *Trades Union Congress Report, 1977*, London, 1978, pp. 651-652.

The relations between the two main trends in the workers' movement—the Communists and the Social Democrats—was a top-priority question for the post-war Europe. These relations determined the extent to which the working class could take advantage of the situation arising from defeat of fascism and the upsurge in the post-war democratic sentiment in the interests of the working people, in the name of peace, democracy and socialism.

The growing authority of the Soviet Union and the Communist parties and the ensuing weakening of the anti-communist prejudices, the Communists' and the Socialists' participation in the Resistance movement, the very context of the upsurge in the democratic sentiment which heightened the popularity of the idea of radical social transformation and, finally, the importance attached to general democratic tasks—all this resulted in the considerable improvement of the relationships among the principal trends in the workers' movement and bolstered the left-wing tendencies in the social democratic and trade union ranks.

The persons who had collaborated with the nazis in France were expelled from the SFIO. The Belgian Socialist Party dissociated itself from the collaborationists, the supporters of Hendrik de Man, a former PSB leader. The Tanner group which had enjoyed a dominant position among the leaders of the Social Democratic Party of Finland, the only social democratic party which had struck an overt alliance with the nazis during the war, lost its positions in the Party. This was accompanied by the strengthening of the Party's left wing which urged to do away with the vestiges of nazism.

The programmes of many Socialist parties included the demand to eradicate fascism, democratise social and political life, socialise certain branches of the economy and effect other far-reaching transformations. The Italian Socialists regarded the setting up of a democratic republic, the socialisation of a number of monopolies and an agrarian reform as the country's top-priority tasks. The Party was at the left flank of international social democracy. The demands similar to the ones it advanced were not infrequently included in the post-war programmes of other Socialist parties. For instance, in the autumn of 1945, the Social Democratic Party of Denmark adopted a radical programme which mapped out progressive socio-economic reforms, including the nationalisation of the enterprises belonging to the monopolies which had co-operated with the nazis. Many of the social democratic programmes of the early post-war years were close to the Communist parties' programmes in terms of the priorities they set forth. This, as well as the experience of the Resistance movement, gave rise to the proposals to unite workers' parties and secure organisational and political unity of the labour movement.

The idea of the merger of the Communist and the Socialist parties was widely discussed in France, Italy, Denmark, Norway and some other countries. The Communists sought to see to it that this idea, popular with the masses, was implemented according to clear-cut political and organisational principles ruling out ideological confusion and thus promoting the labour movement. The Italian Communists proposed to the Socialists to set up a federation of their two parties and consequently to merge them into a single proletarian revolutionary party. The 10th FCP Congress held in June 1945 charted a concrete programme of preparations for the merger of the two parties on the principles of Marxism-Leninism. The Congress adopted the Draft Charter of Unity which declared that the united workers' party aimed at "creating a state ensuring the working-class' power". The Draft emphasised that the Party would struggle for the "victory of socialism in France along the lines corresponding to the country's situation and national spirit".¹

A broad campaign to promote the unity of the working class was unfolding in West Germany. Since July 1945 the country had been witnessing nascent cooperation between the Social Democrats and the Communists, the setting up of joint action committees on the common platform of the struggle to eliminate the vestiges and roots of nazism, to combat starvation, economic disruption and unemployment, to democratise the country, to create democratic self-government bodies and to improve the position of the popular masses.

The merger of West-European workers' parties was not attained primarily because most social democratic leaders either did not work towards it seriously enough (as was the case in France) or wanted to achieve it in such a way that Communist parties be engulfed by Social Democratic parties and adopt a social-reformist stand, as was the case in Norway. Nonetheless, co-operation between the Communists and the Socialists observed in 1944-1947 almost everywhere (in France and Italy this co-operation was envisaged by the Unity of Action Pacts) served as a powerful factor in strengthening the working-class' positions and provided valuable experience on which the labour movement was to rely for many years to come.

In many countries this co-operation made it possible to restore the trade union movement along new lines, consolidate organisational unity of the working class, encourage the unity of action of its various contingents in the everyday struggle, and to change the balance of forces within its ranks, irrespective of their affiliation with any specific trend, in favour of the left. In France, the reconstituted General Confederation of Labour (CGT) united 5.5 million

¹ *Histoire du Parti communiste français (manuel)*, Paris, 1964, pp. 462-463.

workers and maintained close ties with the French Confederation of Christian Workers numbering 750,000 members.¹ Trade unions of all trends co-operated in the National Committee for the Restoration of Trade Union Unity. The Italian General Confederation of Labour (CGIL) which united Communists, Socialists, Catholics and non-party workers and was headed by G. di Vittorio, had a membership of 4.5 million. In West Germany, the joint effort of Social Democrats and Communists resulted in the emergence of new trade unions which defended the rights of the working people and sought to improve their position. In Austria, too, efforts were made to re-constitute class-oriented trade unions. In Japan, the membership of trade unions, many of which had been set up on the Communists' initiative and were structured on the production principle, was growing rapidly. In 1946, they united nearly 4 million workers.²

The stronger positions gained by the militant proletarian vanguard, the better organisation of the working class, the consolidation of its ranks, its mission of a staunch and consistent champion of democracy and of genuine national interests made it possible for the proletariat to establish extensive social ties and act as a unifying national force. The working class' ties with other social groups expanded and in a number of countries its influence spread not only to the poor peasantry, but also to a considerable section of the middle strata.

The decisive contribution made by the working class and its parties to the anti-nazi struggle laid the stage for co-operation among the Communists, the Socialists and the bourgeois anti-fascists within the Resistance movement. After the war, in many countries this led to the setting up of coalition governments with the participation of all the anti-fascist parties. In 1945-1947, representatives of eight Communist parties held ministerial posts in the governments of developed West European capitalist countries—France, Italy, Belgium, Austria, Denmark, Norway, Iceland and Finland. For instance, in 1947 Belgium had four Communist ministers in its government. For a number of years, in France, Italy and Austria the post of deputy prime minister belonged to the Communists. For the first time in their history, the eight Communist parties in question participated in the ruling coalitions. The Communists' participation in governments helped to enhance the influence and broadened the ties of the working class, to combine the struggle "from below" with the struggle "from above" and to effect democratic transformations in various spheres of social life. Representatives of Socialist and

¹ *The Workers' Movement in France (1917-1967)*, Essays, Moscow, 1968, pp. 266, 270 (in Russian).

² *Recent History*, Part II, Moscow, 1959, p. 609 (in Russian).

Social Democratic parties had seats in the post-war governments in twelve developed capitalist countries.

Thus, following the defeat of fascism, the international situation and the balance of forces in capitalist countries (in Austria, Britain, Belgium, Finland, Japan, and above all, in France and Italy) changed, although to different extent, in favour of the working class. Despite serious obstacles, the working class in these countries had a possibility to work towards turning into the nation's leading force, urging consistent democratisation and social justice, and restoration of the economy. The unity of the working-class action and the cohesion of all the progressive forces were important prerequisites for success.

There was a close link between advancement of the working class in capitalist countries, its growing activity, higher political awareness and better organisation, on the one hand, and the expansion and strengthening of its international ties, on the other.

The Communists were true standard-bearers of internationalism. They fostered the unity of action of the working class in capitalist countries and promoted its solidarity with the Soviet Union, with the people's democratic and socialist revolutions in the countries of Central and South-East Europe and with national liberation movements. Thus, the French Communist Party vigorously supported the liberation struggle waged in French colonies. It gave its aid to the Democratic Republic of Vietnam established in 1945. The Italian Communist Party rendered appreciable support to the struggle for the sovereignty and socialist development waged by the peoples of Yugoslavia and Albania. The Communist Party of Great Britain displayed solidarity with the anti-imperialist movement in India and opposed British intervention in the Middle East, Indonesia, Indochina, and China. The Communist Party of the Netherlands resolutely opposed imperialist intervention in Indonesia. The US Communists voiced their protests against the US imperialists' aggressive plans as regards China. Communist parties in all European capitalist countries showed solidarity with the Soviet Union, which played the leading role in the efforts towards a just and peaceful post-war settlement and for maintaining the co-operation that was established among the countries of the anti-fascist coalition during the war.

The setting up of the World Federation of Trade Unions was a major victory of the champions of proletarian internationalism and the unity of the international workers' movement.

The WFTU was set up on the initiative of the supporters of the revolutionary trend in the workers' movement at the First World Trade Union Congress held in Paris late in September 1945. The Congress was attended by trade unionists from 56 countries, who

spoke on behalf of 67 million workers.¹

The Charter adopted by the Congress set forth the principles of the WFTU activity: trade unions' independence, trade union democracy, fraternal mutual assistance, exchange of experience and co-ordination of efforts. Specifying the WFTU aims, the Charter emphasised that the Federation was to unite trade unions all over the world, irrespective of their members' race, nationality, religious and political beliefs, assist in setting up trade unions wherever they did not exist, fight for the extermination of fascism in all its manifestations, struggle to eliminate war and its causes, uphold economic and social rights and democratic freedoms, and consolidate the unity of all working people. The Congress elected the WFTU governing bodies—the General Council and the Executive Committee. The latter set up an Executive Bureau consisting of the Committee's members. Walter Citrine was elected Chairman and Louis Saillant, General Secretary.

The new international trade union organisation considerably differed from the pre-war trade union centres.² It comprised trade unions from all countries—socialist, capitalist, dependent and colonial ones. The Federation incorporated trade unions of various orientation. Some of them supported the Communists, while others gravitated towards social reformists and anarchists, or towards Catholic or other bourgeois parties. Importantly, it was the first organisation to unite almost all trade unions existing in the world. Only very few trade unions refused to participate in the WFTU. Among them were the American Federation of Labour, which opposed any co-operation with the Communists (it should be noted that another American trade union association, CIO, joined the WFTU) and the International Federation of Christian Trade Unions (IFCTU). Without making its position dependent on the stand taken by any one party, the WFTU came out in defence of the most general and vital interests, both economic and political, of the working class. This contributed to the hegemony of the revolutionary trend in the international trade union movement and to the working class' successes.

Since its inception, the WFTU persistently called upon working people, governments, and the United Nations to use all available means to eradicate fascism in Spain, Greece and some other countries. Rallying the working people, the WFTU pointed out that a lasting peace had not yet been established and urged democratic solution to the post-war problems, specifically, to the questions of Germany, Austria, Japan and Korea. The WFTU organised a working people's campaign against the imperialist intervention in Indo-

¹ M. P. Tarasov, *Results of the World Trade Union Congress in Paris*, Moscow, 1945, p. 6 (in Russian).

² See Louis Saillant, *La F.S.M. au service des travailleurs de tous les Pays*, Paris, 1960, pp. 5-60.

nesia, Indochina, Malaya, and Burma. The Federation's representatives in the United Nations' bodies persistently urged to secure extensive social and political rights and a higher living standard for the working people, insisted on the eradication of race discrimination and demanded freedom of trade union activity in all countries. In the spring of 1947, on the initiative of the WFTU, an All-African Trade Union Conference was held in Dakar. The Conference promoted the mobilisation of the working people in African countries to the struggle against colonialism. The WFTU worked towards the unity of the labour movement in all countries.

That the WFTU and other progressive forces in the international labour movement should take an internationalist stand was of particular importance in a context when the situation that took shape in the world after the war was increasingly highlighted by the growing national liberation movement. The independence attained by India, Burma, Indonesia and some other countries in the early post-war years dealt a heavy blow at imperialism's colonial system and thus fostered the development of the workers' movement in the metropolitan countries.

PROBLEMS OF THE POST-WAR LABOUR MOVEMENT

An international situation conducive to the development of the labour movement in capitalist countries was ushered in by the defeat of fascism in the Second World War, in which the Soviet Union played a decisive role. In addition to the above-mentioned ones, it featured other factors and phenomena which came to the fore after 1947 and accounted for the change in the balance of world forces in subsequent years. The Soviet Union, whose economy had been ravaged by the nazi aggression, faced the task of restoring and developing its national economy. In those countries which opted for the socialist way of development, similar tasks were complicated by the resistance offered by the workers' class enemy and, in many instances, by a relatively low level of economic development. Most of the national liberation movements were yet to accumulate experience of struggle, formulate their ultimate goals and intermediate tasks and learn to identify their true allies and enemies no matter what the latter's disguise was. As for the imperialist camp and, more specifically, the powers which had participated in the anti-nazi coalition, following the Second World War they were experiencing the results of state-monopoly regulation on an ever wider scale. Moreover, the results of the war, their scope and potential effect on the capitalist system forced the imperialist countries' ruling circles, which had considerable reserves at their disposal, to feverishly seek—at times not without success—for the ways to counter the advancement of the forces of democracy and social progress. Despite the serious

setbacks suffered by the most aggressive factions of international imperialism, its principal forces had not been undermined. Therefore, it remained a powerful and insidious enemy.

In all Western capitalist countries, even in those where the big monopoly capital had forfeited—due to its connections with nazism—some of its economic positions, the monopolies retained control over the main economic levers. International imperialist reaction could now rely on US capitalism which had grown stronger in the course of the war. The US capitalists' support (not entirely selfless) to their class allies in West European countries turned into a highly important factor of the class struggle which unfolded in the first post-war decade.

While in East European countries the presence of Soviet troops, which had delivered them from the nazi yoke, checked the reaction's manoeuvring, in West European countries the presence of British and US troops contained the efforts of the working class and all the working people, and encouraged their opponents. Not infrequently the allied forces overtly backed the reactionaries. The West-European left was constantly reminded of the British intervention in Greece undertaken in 1944 in order to support the monarchist reaction and counter the efforts of the Resistance movement to assume power in the country.

The US, British and French occupation authorities, which in the early post-war years wielded power in West Germany, banned the activity of nazi organisations, restored bourgeois-democratic freedoms and took certain measures against the nazis and the monopolies associated with them. However, seeking to perpetuate the capitalist system and fearing consistent democratisation which could pave the way for the popular masses' initiatives and the consolidation of left-wing parties, they were half-hearted about these measures, tried to impede the growth of the working-class activity, assisted in hampering the merger of the Communists and the Social Democrats, and not infrequently openly banned mass demonstrations. As distinct from the situation in East Germany, in West Germany the big bourgeoisie, relying on the policy of the occupation authorities, succeeded in re-arranging its forces and retaining both its economic and political positions. Its representatives dominated the administrative bodies set up on the instructions of the occupation authorities. They made use, in their interests, of the sizable public sector which had emerged in the industry throughout the years. With the support of the occupation authorities major bourgeois parties were reconstituted. These authorities encouraged the West German bourgeoisie to emulate the vast political experience accumulated by the US, British and French capitalists in manoeuvring under the conditions of bourgeois democracy.

The occupation authorities' support to the local monopolistic bourgeoisie determined the course of the early post-war development of Japan and Italy. Subsequently, US policy-makers laid an increasing emphasis on economic "aid" to the war-ravaged countries. This aid was meant to bolster capitalism in West European countries.

Apart from manipulating with the levers on which capitalism relied in the international scene (primarily, the power of US imperialism) the monopolistic bourgeoisie's strategy stipulated taking advantage of the position which it managed to retain or gain in individual countries and which implied access to material wealth, i.e. economic leverage, and socio-political reserves.

The war undoubtedly weakened the bourgeoisie, above all, in those countries where the machinery of its domination was ruined in the course of events or in those countries where the bourgeoisie came out against its own nation. However, in the countries where some of its contingents participated in the anti-fascist struggle (the bourgeois wing in the French Resistance movement may be recalled), the bourgeoisie secured for itself stronger positions. Objectively, the setting up of mass parties (mostly confessional by nature) with a predominantly petty-bourgeois membership also strengthened the monopoly capital's positions.

The monopolistic bourgeoisie took advantage of economic disruption in the countries most severely hit by the war and by the nazi management of the economy. The working class had to bear the brunt of economic dislocation. Never since the Great Depression of 1929, had the developed capitalist countries faced an equally disastrous unemployment rate. Under capitalism, the post-war reconversion of the industry could only result in a diminishing number of jobs. In many countries unemployment attained a higher level than in 1929-1933. Thus, in 1945, the number of the unemployed in Italy exceeded 2,000,000.¹ In Japan, with its millions of the unemployed, things changed for the worse even for those who had a job. In the United States, the relatively high wages and overtime payments established during the war became a thing of the past, and symptoms of growing unemployment started to manifest themselves. By October 1945, the weekly wages in the US manufacturing industry dropped to 41 dollars, i.e. by nearly 13 per cent, as against 47.12 dollars in April 1945. At the same time, the cost of living had noticeably risen.² In Italy, the workers' take-home wages in 1945 were only 26.7 per cent of the pre-war level.³ In West Germany, even in 1946 the wages accounted for only 57 per

¹ N. P. Komolova, op. cit., p. 258.

² *Monthly Labor Review*, Vol. 69, No. 2, February 1946, pp. 296, 304.

³ *Politica ed economia*, No. 8, 1971, p. 73.

cent of a worker's family budget, with the rest covered by chance earnings, selling some of the family's possessions, etc.¹

The adverse effect of the economic dislocation (aggravated by speculation and, at times, by the bourgeoisie's overt sabotage) on the domestic political situation had many aspects to it. First of all, the working people were forced to toil for subsistence and this left no spare time or physical possibility for them to go in for political activity, loosened social ties, fostered individualistic attitudes and sometimes led to their pauperisation. The reactionary forces sought to play up on economic difficulties to discredit the idea of democratic transformation and undermine the unity of the anti-fascist forces.

The hard struggle to overcome economic disruption, restore production and the national economy distracted the forces and the attention of democratic organisations, the left-wing parties and coalition governments, in some of which these parties participated in the post-war years. It stands to reason that in the course of this struggle the Communist parties sought not only to attain economic goals, but also to heighten the level of political consciousness of the working class, to draw the public's attention to its selfless efforts and voluntary sacrifice in the name of their countries' restoration and to enhance its authority as society's leading force. The "battle for production" organised by the French Communists is an immediate example. The communist ministers, in their effort to help restore the national economy, relied on the assistance of democratic mass organisations. By the spring of 1947, the French industry had regained its pre-war level and some of the branches had even exceeded it. A similar role in the economic restoration was played by the working class in Italy, Belgium, and some other countries. In an effort to contribute to economic restoration as much as possible, workers refrained from strikes and sought to improve their position by other means, specifically, through workers' parties' representatives in the governments. This accounts, to a degree, for a comparatively small number of strikes in France and Italy in the period ending in May 1947.

In the United States, the situation was different. The country retained its well-adjusted production mechanism and the transfer of the industry to a peaceful footing, with the worn-out plant replaced by sophisticated equipment, did not take long. The working class' struggle was unfolding against a favourable economic background. The employers' vigorous anti-labour, anti-trade-union policies, as well as the weakening and subsequent elimination of the government control over prices brought about a string of strikes.

¹ V. P. Iyerusalimsky, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

The American trade unions took an active part in organising them. In the pre-war and war years their membership had grown and they had become stronger organisationally. In 1945, their right to collective bargaining was recognised officially. They urged further measures to check speculation and inflation, fought against the wage-freeze and were prepared to resolutely uphold their demands.

The campaign for higher wages, initiated in the key branches of the economy, swept the whole of the country. In 1945 and 1946, the number of strikes hit the record level of 4,750 and 4,985, respectively.¹ In 1946 alone, 4,600,000 workers went on strike and 116 million man-days (three times more than over the war years), were lost. This resulted in an unprecedented rise in wages. However, for all their mass character, the strikes were confined to economic demands. This reflected the contradictory nature of the US labour movement in the post-war years.

Although the positions of the US labour unions grew stronger in the course of economic struggle, their political platform remained rather vague. Especially pernicious were the illusions about "national unity". Formulated by the monopolistic bourgeoisie's ideologists and quite popular with the leaders of the labour movement during the war, this idea implied conflictless co-operation between the workers and the employers in the name of the "nation's supreme interests".

The idea of "national unity" was spearheaded against the progressive forces. The right wing and, to a considerable extent, the centrist elements among the trade union leaders, launched a campaign against "communist interference in union affairs".

The government's and the employers' onslaught against the workers and the Communists revealed the dual nature of the ruling circles' strategy aimed at defeating the communist and the progressive forces by isolating them from the labour movement and at subordinating the trade unions to a rigid state-monopoly control. Lacking internal unity, and blinded by anti-communism and the myth about "national unity", the trade union federations failed to prevent an abrupt rightward shift of the government course and remained, for quite a long time, in the mainstream of the ruling circles' policy.

The labour movement in Western Europe, despite a qualitatively different background against which it unfolded, also displayed certain weaknesses.

Along with a number of political factors (such as the presence of British and US troops, internal contradictions plaguing national anti-fascist coalitions and the wavering position of the petty bourgeoisie), there existed economic difficulties which called for a clear-cut hierarchy of priorities in advancing and implementing the left-

¹ *Statistical Abstract of the United States. 1948, p. 224.*

wing programmes of democratic transformation. Thus, in Italy socio-economic reforms were put off until the time the constitution was adopted. Meanwhile, the period of imperialism's discomfiture and retreat could not last infinitely. Having recovered from the shock and regrouped its forces, it launched an offensive.

Not all the contingents of the working class, to say nothing of other strata of the working people, proved sufficiently prepared to operate under new conditions. To a certain extent, this could be accounted for by the changes in the composition of the working class which had occurred during the war. Despite the fact that in the war years it suffered heavier losses than any other social class, in 1945 its membership was much greater than before the war, running to 130 million in 1945.¹ The "fresh blood", with women accounting for a considerable share of it, largely came from the non-proletarian groups of the population. In some countries, among them West Germany and Great Britain, women workers accounted for nearly one-third of the employed.

Of greater importance were the differences in the workers' levels of political awareness and political experience. Prejudice and illusion generated by the capitalist realities and spread by such powerful means of bourgeois ideological influence as the school or the mass media were further expressed through the efforts of bourgeois and social-reformist parties. They affected the working class, to say nothing of the petty bourgeoisie. Many of the illusions and attitudes hampering the working-class struggle stemmed from the developments in the pre-war and war years. The very atmosphere of the upsurge in the democratic sentiment of the public, conducive to the left-wing forces' offensive against the reaction, bred illusion.

The feeling of "revolutionary impatience" became widespread among the proletarian and semi-proletarian groups, especially in those places where the war had caused especially bitter suffering and heavy losses. This feeling lay in the basis of the leftist attitudes which became widespread among some of the participants in the Resistance movement during the war and in the early post-war years. For instance, in Italy an influential Milan group of Socialists headed by L. Basso held that the defeat of fascism would immediately lead to a socialist revolution. The leftist sentiment affected certain Communists as well. The drive to precipitate events at any cost was fraught with the danger of the revolutionary-minded vanguard finding itself in an isolation from the broad masses. Those who advocated the idea of an immediate transfer from the victory over fascism to proletarian revolution and the establishment of so-

¹ Calculated from: *Statistical Yearbook. 1949-1950*, New York, 1950; *Manpower Statistics. O.E.C.D.*, Paris, 1961.

cialism, who took a simplified approach to the ways of effecting this transfer did not take into account the international and domestic realities, first of all, the presence of British and US troops in the countries in question.

Especially widespread was another, still vaguer and ideologically obscure version of the above-mentioned illusion. Inexperienced in politics, the masses believed that the sacrifices and privations of the war had not been futile and that the victory over fascism was bound to result in a new life, one without war, poverty and the exploitation of the working people, and that a new type of leaders, prepared to do away with the bourgeois domination and social inequality, would come to power.

These happy illusions might have developed into a lasting drive to urge a better future and they could have equally well faded at the first contact with the grim post-war realities and generate disappointment in the outcome of the victory. This kind of hesitation was extremely typical of that contingent of the masses which followed the Social Democrats and other reformist parties. It largely accounts for the fact that in nearly all West European countries the early post-war period witnessed the electorate's switch from the exuberant leftist sentiment to the right-wing attitude.

Finally, the political inexperience of the masses, especially the non-proletarian groups, was not infrequently combined with apathy and tiredness caused by the war and privation and by the series of the large-scale developments of the 30s and 40s in the face of which man-in-the-street felt weak and unprotected. The church skilfully played up the sentiments of these backward groups of the masses.

This accounts for the abrupt rise in the importance of the role and influence of the confessional—Catholic and Protestant—parties in the post-war period. These parties came to the fore in West Germany, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and, for a time, in France (the MRP) and pushed into the background the traditional bourgeois parties with their characteristic lack of organisation, experience, of everyday work among the masses and social programmes.

The support many of the working people rendered to these parties signalled a step forward in comparison with their previous social behaviour when they followed the lead of bourgeois forces. The social programmes advanced by the Catholic and Protestant parties to a different extent reflected the vague aspirations of the masses, their drive—albeit not quite clearly defined—for liberation and more just social make-up. They also reflected the masses' aspiration for moral ideals which they could oppose to the callousness of the capitalists who had brought about the disaster of the war. The dominant class banked on the dual character of these parties

and their efforts to combine "renovation" with the preservation of the foundations of capitalism.

When acting as the working-class allies in the offensive of 1945-1947, these parties displayed inconsistency and hesitancy and could not be relied on. The more far-reaching and decisive the democratic reforms effected in the post-war years, the greater and more overt their effort to oppose socialist transformation and to reduce the process of democratisation to traditional bourgeois democracy and the parliamentary system. The leaders of Christian Democratic parties, especially those who played the dominant role in governments, soon established close contacts with monopoly capital and largely turned into its political spokesmen. At the same time, these parties continued to rely on the middle strata of society and a certain part of the working class.

This kind of the evolution experienced by the confessional parties was due to the anti-communist prejudice, the backwardness and passivity of the social forces they relied on, which were reluctant to come out in favour of advancement along the road of democratic transformation, either because of the unwillingness to engage, once again, in a strenuous struggle or because of the fear to forfeit its property. This kind of prejudice vanished under the impact of the Communist parties' heroic struggle and especially the Soviet Union's victories. However, some of the prejudices persisted and were used, in an increasingly overt manner, by the bourgeois press and the church which have recovered after the discomfiture they experienced in the early post-war days. It is to them that Winston Churchill, an idol of the bourgeoisie, appealed in his March 1946 Fulton speech. As a rule, the leaders of the Christian Democratic and other mass bourgeois parties were militant anti-communists who were compelled to agree, for tactical reasons, to a temporary co-operation with the Communist parties.

The anti-communist sentiment started to make itself felt in Social Democratic parties, as well. The desire to put an end to the growing influence of the Communist parties once more started to determine the policies of certain groups within Socialist parties and even those of Socialist parties as a whole. In the years in question international Social Democracy was ravaged by bitter covert and overt struggle between those who, persisting in their anti-communist prejudice, considered capitalism—improved according to the reformist recipes—a lesser evil, and those who deemed it necessary to learn a lesson from the tragic experiences of the split in the working-class movement and made every effort to retain the unity forged in the struggle against fascism. Following the victory the promoters of the first tendency were in the minority. This was true not only of the Giuseppe Saragat group in the Italian Socialist Party, but

also of the convinced opponents of the union with the Communists in the SPD and SFIO. Nonetheless, the more complicated and bitter was the struggle, the more profound were the changes in the situation prevailing in most Social Democratic parties.

The ruling class skilfully played on the intramural wrangling within Social Democracy, as well as on the latter's indecisiveness and reformist illusions. According to the prevailing illusion, which became widespread shortly after the end of the war, there was a possibility of creating "a third force", free of both the "extremes" of communism, and the "excesses" of bourgeois reaction. While professing the "defence of democracy" slogan, the overwhelming majority of the Social Democratic parties increasingly tended to make common cause with the centrist bourgeois parties on a whole range of issues. Sooner or later this was bound to lead to a break with the Communists.

Meanwhile, a lot depended on the political line adopted by Social Democracy. The latter managed to retain the positions it enjoyed in the working-class movement in the developed capitalist countries in the early 20th century, when the Social Democrats were the sole political representative of the working class. In the period of the post-war democratic upsurge the Social Democratic parties were joined by many factory and office workers, as well as people from the petty-bourgeois strata whose attitudes were marked by vague sympathy for socialism, allegiance to democracy (whose class nature they did not understand) and illusions about the possibility of a painless transformation of society in keeping with the principles of social justice. For these groups, whose political awareness only started to develop, the Communist parties were too radical. The Social Democracy's reinforcement secured for itself firm positions in the political arena. Although during the war years the Communists had started to enjoy greater influence, it is only in France, Italy and Finland that after the war they surpassed the Socialists in terms of influence among the masses. The Social Democratic parties still enjoyed superiority over the Communist parties in the capitalist countries both in terms of their membership (8,000,000 as against 3,500,000 in 1947) and in terms of votes cast for them (45,000,000 as against 14,000,000).

The Communist parties sought to retain the working-class unity of action attained in the struggle against fascism, regarding it as the main prerequisite for the working-class hegemony in the post-war political life in Western Europe and Japan. The unity of action of the workers' parties was also important for the proletariat both from the point of view of winning over allies from among the middle strata and in terms of heightening the political awareness of the masses so far inexperienced in politics or affected by various

prejudices and illusions. The unity of action was indispensable for rebuffing the counter-attacks launched by the imperialist reaction and for consolidating and multiplying the successes scored by the labour movement shortly after the war.

However, almost everywhere in Western Europe the unity of the two trends in the labour movement and, even more so, the coalition of all anti-fascist parties proved to be comparatively fragile and failed to stand the test of the bitter and complicated post-war class struggles.

The vulnerability of the anti-fascist forces could be largely accounted for by their strong dependence on the changes in the overall international situation. The global scope of the struggle against fascism, the vast scale of outstanding problems, the interrelationship between the events unfolding during the war and following the war in a large number of countries liberated from the fascist occupation predetermined the influence of the working-class struggle on the alignment of the world political forces. The existence of the international anti-nazi coalition conduced to the emergence of national anti-fascist coalitions in various countries. This largely determined relationships within these coalitions, their unity, power and influence in individual countries in the period when relations among the Great Powers which had co-operated in the war against nazism were constructive and when the ruling circles in the United States and Great Britain were obliged to take into account the decisive role the Soviet Union had played in routing the armed forces of nazi Germany. The emergence of frictions in the relations between the USSR and its Western allies and the cold war launched by the Western powers caused an about-face in the international situation prevailing in the late 1940s.

The above illustrates the complex and contradictory nature of the situation obtaining in the early post-war years. The conditions which were unprecedentedly favourable for the development of the working-class movement combined with other factors reflecting the force of tradition and the multi-faceted character of the international situation. The combination of the positive and negative factors made it difficult to get one's bearings and complicated the tasks facing the vanguard of the working class. The spread of the democratic sentiment conduced to the growth of the Communist parties and the struggle for the working-class unity. However, the emphasis on the solution of the nation-wide democratic problems enhanced the tendency towards obscuring the special role of the working class.

The forging of the political line was also hampered by the abruptness of the changes which occurred in 1944 and 1945. Those parties which were used to underground work now had to learn to function legally; former partisans had to work out constructive ap-

proaches to the tasks facing their states. In this context miscalculation and errors were inevitable.

On the whole, the Communist parties succeeded in taking consistent militant and strategically correct positions and in resolutely upholding the interests of the working people. By participating in post-war governments and in coalitions formed by patriotic forces they contributed to the democratic reforms which determined the course of post-war development. The Communists' experience of the struggle for unity as well as their experience of governmental activity was essential for the subsequent development of the working-class movement in the capitalist countries.

THE COMMUNIST PARTIES' EFFORT TOWARDS RADICAL DEMOCRATIC TRANSFORMATION: RESULTS ACHIEVED IN THE EARLY POST-WAR YEARS

The basis for the policy pursued by the Communist parties during the war and in the early post-war years was provided by the historical decisions of the Seventh Congress of the Communist International, which oriented the working class towards the struggle to defend democratic rights and freedoms and set up broad anti-fascist fronts and coalitions.

During the war and in the early post-war years the international communist movement made great progress in forging its political line, especially as regards practical work in a new historical context. While at the time of the Seventh Congress the broad anti-fascist coalitions were set up for defence purposes and sought to protect the gains of the working class and all the working people against the onslaught of fascism, subsequently the policy of anti-fascist unity acquired an increasingly offensive character. After routing the military and political forces of the Axis powers, the popular unity was to serve the purposes of completing the struggle against fascism and eradicating it altogether. The policy of broad popular unity exceeding the limits of the unity of the working class and the poor peasantry, involving a sizable part of non-proletarian social strata, was increasingly regarded by the Communist parties as strategy, rather than temporary tactics, in the struggle to attain the principal goals of the labour movement in the situation which resulted from the rout of fascism and the changes in the international balance of forces.

The struggle for democratic rights and freedoms proclaimed by the Seventh Congress of the Communist International also acquired everlasting, strategic importance. Having rejected the leftist and sectarian proposals on the immediate transfer to socialist revolution, the Communist parties put forward the task of effecting radical dem-

ocratic renovation of society and creating a transitional system of progressive democracy. Although the transformations expected to lay the basis for progressive democracy were not purely socialist in nature, they could pave the way for subsequent successful work towards building socialism. Thereby Lenin's idea of the development of the bourgeois democratic revolution into a socialist revolution was further elaborated on. The Communist parties expected the progressive democracy to develop into socialism in a relatively peaceful way.

Thus, the Communists' policy of the early post-war years incorporated some of the principal elements of the strategy for advancing towards socialism through democratic struggle, which subsequently was to be further elaborated on the basis of the vast historical experience accumulated by the international communist movement.

The programmes for completing the struggle against fascism and laying the foundation of a democratic system under the leadership of the working class were mapped out at the Communist parties' congresses, most of which were held shortly after the victory in the war, from June to December 1945. In the early post-war months these programmes helped the Communists in developed capitalist countries to find their bearings in the new circumstances and learn to take advantage of them. It stands to reason that the content of democratic transformations put high on the agenda in those days differed depending on the situation in individual countries.

The June 1945 Congress of the French Communist Party advanced the slogan: "Place revival, democracy and unity at the service of France." Many of the top-priority demands advanced by the Congress were consonant with the tasks of the "battle for production", mentioned above. The demands to eradicate fascism had a bearing on the political and economic interests of that part of the financial oligarchy which had had close ties with the Vichy regime. They envisaged confiscation of the property of the traitors, purging the state apparatus from the collaborationists and bringing them to trial. They also envisaged far-reaching socio-economic reforms, such as nationalisation of some industries, improvement of the position of the working people, rendering aid to the peasantry and introducing a more just system of taxation. To help implement this strategy it was proposed to take measures to expand and consolidate political democracy, for instance, hold elections to the National Assembly which was to work out a new constitution and create a stable regime of a democratic republic, and to form a government made up of the true representatives of the people. The Congress stressed that the country's renaissance called for the unity of and support from the entire nation.¹

¹ *Histoire du Parti communiste français*, op. cit., pp. 458-474.

The FCP pointed out that for the time being there could be no question of socialism. The Party's leadership headed by Maurice Thorez urged to establish "new, popular democracy" in France. This was to be attained by co-operation between all progressive forces, with the leading role played by the working class.

Italy, due to its relative social and political backwardness, faced a still greater number of outstanding political tasks of democratic character than France. The leadership of the Italian Communist Party, headed by Palmiro Togliatti, believed that the time for a direct struggle to establish the workers' power was not ripe. Therefore, they called upon the workers to join efforts with all the progressive forces in the fight to eliminate the vestiges of fascism, abolish monarchy, convene a Constituent Assembly and set up "progressive democracy" which would pave the way for subsequent advancement towards socialism. This purpose was to be served by the efforts to implement the Communists' demands to preserve and consolidate committees for national liberation (democratic self-government centres formed by the anti-fascist parties), set up management councils at enterprises, purge the state bodies from fascists, nationalise monopolies and banks, establish people's control over public institutions and the economy, effect an agrarian reform through redeeming landowners' land and handing it over to farm-labourers' and peasants' co-operatives, improving the terms of land lease, etc.

Paramount importance was attached to political demands. The Communists sought to rally the entire people in the campaign to implement them and to preserve and strengthen the anti-fascist parties' bloc before launching the struggle to urge the solution of socio-economic problems. The line of progressive democracy was mapped out by the ICP Congress held at the end of 1945.

Similar programmes were elaborated by the Communist parties in the countries liberated from fascist or military dictatorships. These programmes differed in the scope and specific content of democratic tasks they formulated. The Japanese Communist Party set itself the task of fighting to abolish the monarchy, effect an agrarian reform, establish workers' control over production, and urge a constitution enabling the working people to exercise their democratic rights. Finland's Communists sought to nationalise some of the industries, carry out a democratic agrarian reform, purge the state machinery from reactionary elements, increase workers' wages and take other measures in the interests of the people. The Communist Party of Belgium called for the nationalisation of coal mines, electric power stations and banks. All this could be effected only through a persistent struggle, preserving and consolidating the unity of the working class and securing for it the support of non-proletarian

masses. Many of the demands advanced by the Communists were supported by Social Democrats, trade unionists and progressive intellectuals. Now, in contradistinction to the previous period, the working class could make a wide use of legal forms of struggle, relying on democratic freedoms and institutions. Moreover, in contradistinction to both the preceding and the subsequent historical periods of the working-class movement, in a number of countries it was possible to combine mass struggles with the Communists' governmental activity. The years of 1945-1947 were marked by the working class' major successes in social, economic and political areas and by the partial implementation of the wide programme of demands mapped out by the Communist parties. The scope of these successes in individual countries was largely determined by the combination of the above-mentioned favourable and unfavourable factors.

The greatest successes were scored by the working people in those countries where the Communist parties were the strongest (France and Italy), where the Resistance movement acquired an especially wide scale during the war and where the post-war democratic upsurge was therefore especially powerful. In these countries the monopoly capital managed to preserve its domination at the cost of a bitter struggle and serious compromise.

In most of the smaller West European countries the post-war democratic upsurge was somewhat less impressive. This can be accounted for by the strong influence of social-reformist trends on the working class here and the narrower scale of the Resistance movement. It is no accident that in Denmark and Norway the Communists were removed from the governments much earlier (by the end of 1945) than in France and Italy. In the Netherlands and Sweden (which did not participate in the war), the Communists were not represented in the government at all. It is only in Belgium and Austria that the Communists retained seats in the government up to 1947. However, their actual influence was comparatively insignificant. Nonetheless, in these countries as well, the working class succeeded in gaining considerable concessions. Less impressive were the working class' victories (scored primarily in the purely material sphere) in Canada, Australia and New Zealand which were less affected by the democratic upsurge caused by the utter defeat of the Axis powers.

The working class in the West European countries was not satisfied with the mere restoration of democratic freedoms following the rout of fascist regimes. It obtained, and not without success, the democratisation of political life.

The new constitutions adopted in some countries following their liberation consolidated the changes that had taken place in political

life. The drafting and adoption of constitutions was usually accompanied by a bitter struggle. For instance, in France, the first draft of the constitution, which was adopted by the left majority of the Constituent Assembly and proclaimed "the people's supreme, single and indivisible, unshakable and inalienable power... , established—on the voluntary basis—an alliance with the peoples in the overseas territories... , secured for the people the broadest possible economic and social rights",¹ was rejected at a referendum by an insignificant majority of votes after a bitter campaign launched by the bourgeoisie to intimidate the philistines with "the communist threat". In the autumn of 1946 a new text of the constitution was drafted and approved by a referendum as a result of a compromise between the workers and the bourgeois parties. Despite certain concessions to the bourgeoisie and the petty owners, the constitution contained the most important provisions of the first draft, was more democratic than the Constitution of the Third Republic and thus signalled a major victory of the working class.

The question of the state system to be adopted by Italy aroused violent controversy. The monarchists sought to win over to their side the politically inexperienced groups of the population, especially, women, who had never taken part in the polls before. At a referendum on the problem of the state system held on June 2, 1946, 12,700,000 voters came out in favour of a republic and 10,700,000 voted for a monarchy. The monarchists tried to call in question and to ignore the will of the majority. Their attempts were rebuffed by the mass protests organised by the supporters of the republic. Italy became a republic. The main provisions of its constitution were worked out by the Constituent Assembly—with the active participation of its Communist faction—in the period when the left-wing parties still had seats in the government and was finally endorsed in December 1947. It was perhaps the most democratic constitution in the bourgeois world. Italy was proclaimed "a republic based on labour", with a two-chamber parliament, universal suffrage and proportional representation. The constitution envisaged broad regional autonomy and the right of the working people to participate in the administration of the state through their political and trade union organisations. It recognised the citizens' right to work and social security and equality between man and woman, and proclaimed broad democratic freedoms. Although the constitution guaranteed private property, it recognised the possibility of its being limited and nationalised (this covered the possibility of alienating land property) and declared the need for the working people's involvement in the management of production. However, the realisation of these possibilities depended on the balance of political forces in the

¹ Maurice Thorez, *Fils du peuple*, Paris, 1949, p. 213.

country and on the working people's activity, organisation and political awareness.

Despite its guaranteeing private ownership and securing extensive rights for the Catholic Church, the 1947 constitution consolidated the positions of the working class.

While in Italy the left succeeded in the establishment of a republic, in Japan, the constitution worked out under the control of the US occupation authorities and enforced in May 1947, preserved the monarchy. Admittedly, the emperor was deprived of actual power and turned into a "symbol of national unity". The constitution proclaimed the sovereignty of the people and democratic freedoms, and broadened parliamentary powers. Significantly, the constitution proclaimed Japan's refusal to take part in wars and maintain armed forces. The Soviet Union's participation in the governing and supervising bodies set up by the victorious countries in Japan was a major factor in the democratisation of the country in the early post-war years.

Monarchies were preserved in a number of smaller West European countries, too. In Belgium, however, mass protests prevented the king, who had compromised himself by collaborating with the nazis, from returning to the country. In Iceland, which during the war proclaimed its independence of Denmark, a republic was established.

The working class and its parties devoted great attention to democratic transformation in the socio-economic sphere. The drive to undermine the power of monopolies, the mainstay of fascism, explains why in these years the slogan of nationalisation, advanced not only by the Communists, but also by some Social Democratic and even bourgeois reformist circles, was so popular.

In Austria, where in 1945 enterprises were confiscated from their former owners—German monopolies and Hitlerites' stooges—nationalisation covered the key branches of the economy. In Italy, the enterprises which had belonged to Germans or to Mussolini's myrmidons were placed under the control of the state. In France, the working class succeeded in carrying out the nationalisation of mines, railways, five major banks, electric power and gas-producing enterprises, with compensation paid out to the owners. The powerful public sector which was thus formed accounted for more than 20 per cent of the national industrial output. Workers' representatives were included in the management of many enterprises. The working class was facing good prospects for exerting actual influence on the development of the public sector. However, in subsequent years due to the removal of communist ministers from the government and the split in the workers' movement these prospects waned.

In Great Britain, the Labour government carried out a rather extensive nationalisation programme. The Bank of England, the

coal industry, the electric power and gas industries, as well as the air, rail, motor, and water (inland and cabotage) transport and part of the municipal transport were nationalised. Later, the nationalisation programme covered the major metallurgical enterprises. Nationalisation could have served as a means of radically restructuring the economy and redistributing the national income in the interest of the working people. However, the Labour government carried out the nationalisation programme in such a way that it primarily promoted the interests of the bourgeoisie. The government granted the former owners of nationalised enterprises inordinately high compensation. The expenditure that involved compensation payments and the modernisation of the nationalised enterprises taxed the state budget or, rather, the working people. The workers were not admitted to the management of the nationalised enterprises, neither was a workers' control system introduced. In most cases, former owners or specialists of their choice were appointed managers of the nationalised enterprises. The nationalised industries supplied private monopoly capitalists with cheap metal, energy and transport. The nationalised enterprises which employed about 20 per cent of all the industrial and office workers in the country, constituted the state-monopoly sector.

At the same time, even the bourgeois-style nationalisation marked a step forward. It generated new contradictions within the dominant class (between the monopolies and the state enterprise managers), helped to disprove the myth about the indispensability of private capitalist methods of economic management (this explains why the bourgeoisie vehemently opposed some of the measures involved in nationalisation and subsequently succeeded in getting partial denationalisation) and opened before the working class prospects for struggle to establish democratic control over production.

Various bodies made up of workers' representatives and expected to restrict the arbitrary rule of the capitalists and the managers appointed by the latter, to uphold the workers' rights as laid down in labour legislation and collective agreements, to organise workers' leisure, etc. were established and reestablished at industrial enterprises in many countries. In those years, production committees in Finland, production councils in West Germany and management councils in Italy not infrequently interfered with the management of enterprises and had a great role to play throughout the period of economic reconstruction. In Italy, trade unions won the right to supervise the matters of hiring and dismissing workers. In all countries, workers campaigned to expand the rights of the workers' bodies set up at the enterprises. This campaign met with the ferocious resistance of the employers who did not want to forfeit their power in the sphere of production. As a rule, a few years later the resist-

ance they offered resulted in frustrating the efforts to maintain workers' control over production and restricting—either *de facto* or *de jure*—the rights of the workers' bodies. In Italy, for instance, the management councils were not registered by legislation. Some years later they were dissolved. Only the so-called inner commissions, whose powers were extremely limited, were preserved. The capitalists were no longer in a position to fully eliminate the workers' representative bodies operative at enterprises.

By relying on mass organisations, the working class scored, in the first post-war years, a number of other successes in the social area, such as higher wages (which did not, however, compensate for the losses caused by inflation), a shorter working day, better working conditions, greater labour safety, improved social security and social insurance systems, larger sums allocated to education and health care, a more progressive system of taxation, a partial agrarian reform, etc.

In France, for instance, a law guaranteeing equal pay for men and women was passed. The right to temporary and permanent disablement and old age benefits now covered all hired workers. Pensions paid to the war veterans were increased 3.5 times, benefits granted to families with many children grew by 85 per cent, and housing construction projects were expanded. The minimum untaxable wages rose from 22,000 to 60,000 francs. Collective bargaining between workers and employers became compulsory. Land lease rules were revised in favour of the peasants.

In Italy, a sliding scale of wages (providing for increases to compensate for the growth in prices), improved pension schemes and paid leaves were introduced. Part of the untilled big landowners' lands was handed over to the peasants and the share of the harvest received by the share croppers was increased.

The law on social insurance, adopted in Belgium in 1947, provided for old age, sickness, and disablement benefits. In Belgium and the Netherlands, the workers were granted annual two-week paid leaves.

In Finland, legislation ensured an eight-hour working day, paid leaves, withdrawal of surplus land from big landowners and allotting land to the 100,000 needy.

In Britain, the introduction of free medical care was the most important post-war achievement of the working class. The restrictions imposed on trade union rights in 1927 were repealed, the social insurance system was improved so as to cover all categories of the working people, benefits were increased (in particular, children-support benefits were granted after the birth of the second child), retirement age was lowered to 65 for men and 60 for women. Progressive changes were effected in the secondary educational system.

In the Scandinavian countries the early post-war years saw the reduction in taxes imposed on low-income categories of people, a slight increase in taxes imposed on the bourgeoisie, establishment of a three-week-long paid leave and introduction of annual children-support benefits and general compulsory insurance.

In Japan, the agrarian reform launched in 1947 provided for the redemption of the leased landowners' land by the peasants and for a considerable softening of the terms of lease. Among the highlights of the early post-war years was the adoption of more progressive labour legislation, the introduction of an eight-hour working day and unemployment insurance, the proclamation of the freedom of trade union activity and the replacement of the old militarist-monarchic educational system by a bourgeois-democratic one.

All these transformations were of a general democratic character and did not undermine the mainstays of the capitalist system. However, they were conducive to the working-class struggle and had a positive effect on socio-economic development. They compelled the monopoly capital to abandon the most brutal methods of domination and exploitation and forced it, in subsequent years, to give heed to the strength of its class antagonist. The monopolistic bourgeoisie gradually realised that it would be able to retain power only at the cost of further socio-economic concessions in the context of the growing importance of the state. Without the assistance of the state, without its taking possession of the key levers of economic management, it was impossible to succeed in social manoeuvring and maintain sufficiently high development rates which could compensate for the concessions the monopolistic bourgeoisie was forced to agree to.

Its class instinct helped the monopolistic bourgeoisie to understand that the reforms effected in 1945-1947 were dangerous for capitalism only inasmuch as they were carried out in the context of a change in the balance of forces in favour of the working class. Therefore, the monopolistic bourgeoisie tried to redress the balance. As early as the immediate post-war months the ruling classes in West European countries, supported by the British and US occupation authorities, did everything they could to dismantle the military and political structure of the Resistance movement. For instance, the French internal army, which relied on the front-rank contingents of working people, was disbanded, the patriotic militia was disarmed, the people's courts were liquidated and the national liberation committees were restricted in their activity. In Italy, under the pressure of the occupation authorities the partisan army was disbanded, the national liberation committees were continuously hampered in exercising their rights and then were abolished altogether, just like in France. However, the power of the left-wing forces was

rooted not only in the authority and organisational structure of the Resistance movement, but also in the unity of action of the workers' parties and the unity of anti-fascist coalitions. Therefore, enormous efforts were made to undermine this unity. The advocates of the break with the Communists in Social Democratic and other mass parties enjoyed the vigorous assistance and support of the imperialist quarters.

In their post-war evolution the West European Social Democratic parties traversed a path from undermining the alliance with the Communists through rejecting any co-operation with them to overt anti-communism. In the late 1940s, only the Italian Socialist Party continued to co-operate with the Communists. However, the bitter wrangling between the left and the right wings of the ISP led to the splits of 1947 and 1949. The ISP's authority among the constituents waned (while in 1946 it had 20.7 per cent of the votes, in 1953 it won only 12.7 per cent of them).

It goes without saying that the reasons for further worsening of relations between the Communists and the Social Democrats cannot be reduced to imperialist interference, although it certainly had a most adverse effect. The serious factors that conduced to the split emerged within the workers' movement itself. Among them were considerable differences in the levels of political awareness of various contingents of the working class, which were especially vivid in the ideological sphere. One should also mention ideological and political hegemony of the petty bourgeoisie over the proletariat in some Social Democratic parties; the difference in organisational principles of the Communist and the Social Democratic parties; serious controversies as regards the priority of transformations to be effected, the attitude to democracy, the foreign-policy orientation and the assessment to be given to the Soviet Union's experience. Lastly, one should mention the long-standing tradition of mutual mistrust which was not eradicated during the short period of co-operation.

Seeking to promote the isolation of the Social Democrats, their leaders were gradually preparing for the reconstitution of the Socialist International. It is no accident that the very idea of restoring the International was advanced by the British Labour Party which, unlike most Social Democratic parties, recognised the need for uniting with the USSR in the struggle against fascism, but flatly refused to co-operate with the Communists. In November 1947, the international Social Democratic conference founded the Committee of International Socialist Conference (COMISCO). The COMISCO instructed a standing committee, headed by Morgan Phillips, a prominent Labourite, and Julius Braunthal, a well-known Austrian Social Democrat, to launch preparations for setting up the Socialist International.

The Communists sought to preserve the unity of the working people's class and political forces forged in the struggle against fascism. However, it was increasingly difficult to reach this goal. Compelled to choose between maintaining an alliance with the Communists and retaining the foundations of the existing system ("Western democracy"), the social-reformist parties gravitated towards ever closer co-operation with the forces of capitalism. The intensification of the cold war contributed to the worsening of relations between the Communists and the Social Democrats in capitalist countries.

All this impeded the advancement of the working class in capitalist countries, launched in the circumstances ushered in by the victory over fascism, hampered the furthering of democratic transformations initiated shortly after the war, and helped the dominant classes to regroup their forces and, upon resuming control over the situation, mount an onslaught on the positions gained by the labour movement.

Nonetheless, the early post-war period (1945-1947) has gone down in the history of developed capitalist countries as a period marked by the noticeable strengthening of the working class' power, the workers' advancement and new gains. The successes scored in 1945-1947 served as a starting point for the subsequent development of the working-class movement and were thus comparable to the victories won in the period of the revolutionary upsurge of 1918-1923, which gave an impetus to the development of the movement between the two world wars.

The working class' advancement did not develop in a similar manner in all countries. The greatest successes were scored by the workers in France and Italy. The role played by the working class in the struggle for liberation and the position it had taken by the time of liberation ensured its considerable progress. In Germany and Japan, the post-war efforts of the workers were primarily focused on restoring workers' organisations. Over a short period of time the workers in these countries traversed a long road and scored certain successes; however, the latter were not comparable to the victories won by the workers in Italy and France. In West Germany, the disorientation of the great masses of the working class and the severance of its revolutionary traditions as a result of the nazi terror and demagoguery had a lasting effect. However, here, too, unmistakable signs of a democratic upsurge and the growth in the authority of the Communists and consistent anti-fascists were observed. British workers made appreciable progress as well. More complicated was the situation in the United States, where the working class continued to retain its allegiance to the bourgeois parties, its struggle being confined to purely economic demands.

The working class failed to consolidate all the achievements gained in the early post-war years. They could only have been retained and consolidated by a continuous advancement towards radical democratic transformation affecting the mainstays of the existing system. The reaction's counter-offensive prevented this. However, the struggle waged by the working people in the early post-war years predetermined the subsequent development of capitalist countries in Western Europe and elsewhere. The world socialism's influence on the class struggle in these countries was dramatically enhanced. The public and political activity of the broadest working masses, above all, the working class, which had grown more politically conscious and organised, acquired a new dimension. Socialist ideals became even more popular within the labour movement.

Chapter 2

THE WORKING-CLASS MOVEMENT AND THE COLD WAR (THE LATE 1940s AND THE FIRST HALF OF THE 1950s)

The years of 1947-1948 saw the beginning of a more difficult period in the history of the working-class movement in developed capitalist countries. A large-scale, almost all-out working-class offensive gradually gave way to stubborn class battles when every step forward called for an enormous effort. It was also a period of partial retreats, setbacks and of the division and regrouping of forces. The proletariat in these countries faced a counter-offensive launched by international reaction which in a large measure manifested itself in the cold war against the socialist countries.

THE BEGINNING OF THE COLD WAR AND THE GROWING COMPLEXITY OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONDITIONS OF THE WORKING-CLASS STRUGGLE

The greatest difficulties experienced by the labour movement in the late 40s and the early 50s were ushered in by the abrupt change for the worse in the international situation. The change was effected by the vigorous effort of the reactionary forces which by that time had become more active in the imperialist world, above all in the United States. The US and British ruling circles had in fact repudiated the agreements and understandings reached during the war and embarked on the path of cold war, of direct military confrontation with the socialist countries and the national liberation movement. US imperialism organised and led the onslaught of the reactionary and anti-communist forces both within the capitalist system and in the world arena as a whole, thus assuming the role of a "world policeman".

The US role in the post-war world, including the imperialist camp, was predetermined by a number of factors. The USA emerged from the war with its military and economic potentials strengthened. In

1946, it accounted for more than 50 per cent of the capitalist world's output. Having amassed enormous financial resources and become superior to all other imperialist powers, the United States was in a position to impose its will on the entire capitalist world. The US ruling quarters had long been striving after this role.

That the United States had been a bastion of anti-communism since pre-war times (it should be recalled, for instance, that it was the last of the imperialist powers to grant diplomatic recognition to the USSR) could be largely accounted for by the lack of a strong and viable left-wing domestic alternative to the bourgeois policy. As for the early post-war years, the deep-rooted anti-communist tendencies in the US policy were intentionally encouraged by the ruling circles of the West European countries, above all Great Britain and France, which thereby hoped to make American might promote the European capitalists' interests both in Europe and elsewhere and, in particular, to preserve their positions in the colonies on the plea of fighting "communist penetration" there.

The way the Second World War ended pushed the inter-imperialist contradictions into the background and made the ruling classes in all imperialist countries focus on defending their own class interests. They were thus objectively faced with the following tasks—to find practical ways of countering socialism whose potentialities and political authority had considerably grown; to neutralise the successes scored by the working class and all the democratic forces in capitalist countries and make them "roll back"; to prevent the colonialist system from collapsing; to strengthen those component parts of the capitalist system which were hardest hit by the economic, political and other consequences of the Second World War.

Imperialism failed to forestall the victory of people's democratic revolutions in the countries of Central and South-East Europe. These revolutions opened up for them vast possibilities of developing along the lines of democracy and socialism. By 1949, the expansion of political co-operation and relations based on fraternal mutual assistance between these countries and the Soviet Union had laid the stage for organising broader economic co-operation among the socialist countries in Europe. In 1949 the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance was set up. The change in the balance of world forces in favour of socialism was also promoted by the victory of the popular revolution in China and the proclamation of the People's Republic of China in the autumn of 1949. The victorious Chinese revolution dealt a heavy blow at imperialism's positions in Asia and accelerated the growth of the national liberation movement on the Asian continent. The development of North Vietnam and North Korea along socialist lines continued. For the first time in history there emerged inter-state relations of a new,

socialist type, based on the principles of proletarian internationalism.

However, having suffered serious setbacks in some areas imperialism was determined to get back what it had lost in other areas. In 1947, the Truman Doctrine was proclaimed. It was tantamount to an overt declaration of the United States' right to interfere in the affairs of other states at its own discretion and a declaration of war on the national liberation and patriotic movements. Almost simultaneously, the United States set forth the "containment of communism" doctrine which was meant to underlie, above all, US-Soviet relations, and the Marshall Plan which covered inter-imperialist relations. The authors of the "containment" doctrine proceeded from a complete negation of the possibility and expediency of peaceful coexistence and post-war co-operation among the states with the opposed social systems. They opted for the position-of-strength policy vis-à-vis the USSR and other socialist states, which implied interference in their internal affairs and local wars against socialist countries and the advanced contingents of the national liberation movements.

There were different aims behind the Marshall Plan. Nonetheless, they were directly linked to the US previous general strategic goals. The implementation of this plan was expected, first, to stabilise European capitalism by restoring the economic, political and institutional structures destroyed or undermined during the war, and, second, to consolidate the reactionary imperialist forces in West European capitalist countries and unite them under US leadership. That was to secure for the United States actual domination over the world capitalist system and to help it to mobilise the latter's resources to the struggle against socialism, democracy and progress in those areas and in those forms which would best promote the interests of the US ruling circles.

Moreover, the early post-war years (up to the 1951-1952 crisis) were marked by a relatively rapid economic growth in capitalist countries, ensured by restoring the war-ravaged economies, renewing fixed assets, meeting deferred demands and, to a certain extent, by effecting government projects aimed at accelerating economic development. As early as the late 40s, industrial output in capitalist countries reached the pre-war level, between 1948 and 1955 it grew by nearly 50 per cent. This placed at the disposal of imperialism material resources sufficient to cope with its national and international tasks, on the one hand, and consolidated the positions of the ruling circles and enabled them to bank on the rise in the working people's living conditions by presenting them as the result of class collaboration, on the other. The monopolists relied on higher-income groups as a breeding ground for the spread of anti-communist psychosis. It is to these politically inexperienced social groups that the

propaganda allegations about the external and internal "communist threat" looming over the common people in capitalist countries were addressed. For a number of reasons, such propaganda became especially widespread in the United States.

As the United States turned into the main material and leading force of capitalism, the latter's economic consolidation was bolstered by expanding military co-operation among capitalist countries. The so-called Western European Union, based on the Brussels Treaty of March 1948, was essentially a military bloc uniting Great Britain, France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxemburg. The Western European Union laid the stage for setting up, in April 1949, a broader military-political bloc, NATO. The latter initially united 12 capitalist countries led by the United States. The NATO never concealed its anti-Soviet, anti-communist orientation. It also set itself the tasks of fighting against the growing national liberation movement and suppressing progressive, democratic, anti-monopoly forces in capitalist countries. The SEATO, CENTO and other imperialist blocs, set up later, were modelled after the NATO. In the early 50s, the United States signed treaties of "mutual security" with a number of states in Western Europe and Asia. These treaties supplemented the previously elaborated measures designed to ensure US-British-Canadian and inter-American military co-operation. This crowned the formation of the main structure of imperialist aggressive blocs. The United States established itself as a political, economic and military centre of imperialism.

Thus, a foundation for the principal long-term imperialist policies was laid in 1947-1949. These policies were to be featured by the resort to military force and power methods in relations with the socialist system and the national liberation movement; by extremely reactionary and aggressive anti-communism underlying the imperialist governments' domestic and foreign activities, and by the inordinately important role played by the United States in elaborating and implementing them. The doctrine of containment was first replaced by the doctrine of "liberation" and then, by the doctrine of "rolling back". The United States unleashed a war in Korea and started to expand its interference in Indochina. This inevitably aggravated the cold war and built up international tensions.

The cold war policy, from its very inception, had a "domestic" aspect to which the ruling circles in imperialist states at times attached even greater importance than to its foreign aspect. Thus, the allegations about the Soviet, Soviet-Chinese or world communist threat were directed against the Communist and Workers' parties in capitalist countries, too. Imperialist propaganda pictured the Communists in these countries as foreign or "Moscow's agents" who were allegedly acting to the detriment of their own peoples.

Moreover, it associated all the left-wing and democratic forces in capitalist countries, especially their leaders and activists, with the Communists, so that the latter and the former were persecuted, and in some countries subjected to police repression.

The reactionary forces managed to involve in the struggle against the Communists those mass parties which relied on the middle strata and some part of the working people and which in 1945 and 1946 campaigned for democracy and were known as anti-fascist. Among them were Catholic parties in Italy, France and other countries. The middle strata of the population who supported these parties opposed fascism; however, they feared socialist transformation. Already in the early post-war years they were largely affected by bourgeois propaganda according to which further democratic transformation of society was bound to lead to repudiation of private ownership, to violence, dictatorship and the suppression of freedoms. Somewhat later, the Communists were openly identified with these evils and the proprietors' blind hatred came down on them. Moreover, in 1947-1948, many Social Democratic leaders refused to support the Communist parties' campaigns urging to effect radical socio-economic transformations and satisfy the working people's demands. They preferred to strike an alliance with bourgeois parties on a plea of the growing "danger from without" and the need to "defend democracy".

However, the international situation had many aspects to it. The general balance of forces in the world was primarily determined by such factors as the growing might of the Soviet Union, the consolidation of the socialist system and the victory of the people's revolution in China. As early as 1948, as a result of the successful implementation of the first post-war plan (1946-1950) for the restoration and development of the national economy, the Soviet industrial output exceeded the pre-war level; by the end of that five-year period the 1940 industrial production level was exceeded by 70 per cent (by 100 per cent with respect to the output of the heavy industry). The Fifth Five-Year Period (1951-1955) was highlighted by a further growth in social production and the consolidation of the Soviet social and state systems. The economic successes scored by the Soviet Union disproved the forecasts of bourgeois theorists and politicians who claimed that without Western help the Soviet Union would never be able to heal its war-inflicted wounds and move forward.

Of great political importance was the Soviet Union's testing of atomic (1949) and subsequently, thermonuclear weapons (1953). The latter kind of weapons was tested for the first time in history. Thus, the US monopoly of the most destructive modern weapons was eliminated, while the Soviet Union and the forces of peace the

world over were now in a position to hold in check the most aggressive and adventurist elements among the ruling circles of the imperialist states. Of special significance in this context was the Leninist principle of peaceful co-existence of states with different social systems, one of the basic principles of the foreign policy pursued by the CPSU and the Soviet state. In 1946-1949, the Soviet Union repeatedly used the UN rostrum to call for the elimination of the causes of mutual mistrust between the socialist and the capitalist states by dismantling military bases deployed on foreign territories, withdrawing foreign troops to the countries where they belonged, banning the propaganda of war and concluding a Five Great Power Peace Pact.

When the Western powers, above all the United States, proved unwilling to agree to any of the proposed measures towards effecting disarmament and forestalling a new world war, the Soviet Union continued to persistently and vigorously urge to ban weapons of mass destruction and to reduce non-nuclear weapons and armed forces. These initiatives were bolstered by practical steps. Thus, following the end of the war the Soviet Union withdrew its troops from China, Korea, Norway, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Iran and other countries where they had been brought up during the war. While displaying its preparedness to expand equitable political co-operation with the West on the basis of peaceful coexistence, the Soviet Union also sought to broaden economic relations with capitalist states and vigorously counteracted economic discrimination against socialist countries which was launched in the early 1950s by the West on the initiative and at a direct instigation of US imperialism.

Meanwhile, numerous successes were being scored in building socialism in the countries of people's democracy and in the expanding of economic and political co-operation among socialist states. The rates of economic growth in socialist countries considerably exceeded those in capitalist countries. Thus, whereas in 1950 industrial production in all capitalist countries was 1.4 times that of the 1937 level, industrial production in socialist countries exceeded the 1937 level by a factor of 1.9; by 1953 the difference in the rates of growth in the two groups of countries had become even more marked, having reached 70 per cent in the capitalist and nearly 200 per cent in the socialist countries. With the growth in the economic potential, ideological and political maturity and cohesion of the socialist countries, their influence in the international arena became stronger. Once again experience testified that Lenin was right in contending that socialism would influence the course of the world revolutionary process mainly through its economic policy. In 1950, the socialist countries, whose total area amounted to 26 per cent of the world's

territory and whose population made up 35 per cent of the world's population accounted for nearly 20 per cent of the world's industrial output. In 1955 they accounted for nearly 27 per cent of it.¹

The economic successes scored by the socialist countries, above all the Soviet Union, enabled them to cope with the tasks posed by the domestic socio-economic development and, at the same time, to build up their military potential in response to imperialist war preparations. Thereby they raised a barrier on the way of the imperialist position-of-strength policy. The Warsaw Treaty, signed in 1955, signalled a qualitatively new stage in the development of co-operation among the socialist states. At the same time, material and political prerequisites for more extensive, many-sided and effective help to the anti-imperialist forces were created.

The new type of political and economic relations established by socialism among a number of states and peoples had a revolutionising effect on the peoples in colonial and semi-dependent countries, too. Aid and support were given to the national liberation movement not only by the socialist countries, but also by the Communist parties and the working-class movement in the advanced capitalist countries. Therefore, the first half of the 50s witnessed new successes of the growing national liberation movement. India put an end to its dependence on the British crown and proclaimed itself a republic. Indonesia won the war for independence against the Dutch colonialists and became a united republic. Burma, Ceylon, Egypt, Lybia and Sudan embarked on the road of independent development. Although imperialism still managed to retain its positions in Latin America and in the larger part of Africa, and to draw some of the newly-free national states into regional military blocs and alliances (for instance, in those years Pakistan, Thailand and the Philippines joined such blocs), on the whole, the colonial system continued to disintegrate. The voice of the young national states acquired strength at international forums and organisations and in world politics in general. Thus, whereas in its time (1937) the League of Nations had among its members only ten African and Asian states, the United Nations, at the time of its inception, incorporated 11 such countries; by 1955, their number had grown to 23.

The early 1950s witnessed the emergence of the main principles of neutralism, a policy which, being in those years consonant with the interests of the young states, turned into an important factor in strengthening peace and international security, in broadening the practice of peaceful coexistence, and in the general democratisation of international and inter-state relations on an anti-imperialist plat-

¹ See *International Relations After the Second World War*, Vol. 2, Moscow, 1963, pp. 33, 34 (in Russian).

form. Subsequently, neutralism provided the basis for the non-aligned movement, one of the most influential forces in present-day world politics.

Thus, while the late 40s and the early 50s were marked by the activation of the imperialist reactionary forces in all areas, by the spread of the cold war and the general deterioration of the international situation, by the mid-50s there had emerged a vast zone of peace which incorporated all that was progressive in the world arena, all that had a positive effect on international relations. The countries of the socialist community led by the Soviet Union constituted the nucleus of this zone. It is here that their economic and defensive potential was gradually accumulated, with which imperialism was forced to reckon. The anti-imperialist positions were also shared by the young national states in Asia and Africa, as well as the numerous national contingents of the anti-colonial movement which continued to intensify their struggle for the right of nations to self-sufficient, independent development. This combination of contradictory, opposed trends in international life—the reactionary forces' offensive and, in response to it, the growing counter-offensive of the forces of progress and socialism—created a complex and, in many respects, unusual context for the development of the labour movement in capitalist countries. At the same time, it opened up new vistas for this movement.

In these conditions the hard and bitter class struggle was marked by alternating successes and setbacks. The greatest victories were gained in those countries where the labour movement was led by its revolutionary vanguard (France, Italy and, in a sense, Japan).

THE LEFT-WING FORCES AND THE WORKERS' STRUGGLE IN FRANCE, ITALY AND JAPAN

The militant trend in the labour movement in France, Italy and, in a certain respect, Japan, enjoyed influence and authority among the working masses and thus was able to offer an effective resistance to the reactionary forces despite all the hardships that marked the period in question.

In 1947, taking advantage of the split in the working class, the monopolistic bourgeoisie in *France* assumed the offensive. It was supported by the US imperialists who kept their army in France until the end of 1947. The reaction's onslaught could only be opposed provided the two workers' parties, the Communist and the Socialist, maintained co-operation. Meanwhile, the relations between them were rapidly deteriorating.

Apart from the differences on the foreign policy issues which multiplied as Europe became increasingly involved in the cold war,

the Communists and the Socialists were divided by their different interpretation of the government's internal political tasks. The SFIO policy was largely determined by its leader's (i.e. Léon Blum's) concept, according to which there was a radical difference between the Socialists' participation in the government and their seizure of power. Blum claimed that radical reforms designed to break the existing system and pave the way to socialism were only possible provided the workers' parties seized power. Meanwhile, the post-war context, as he saw it, was suitable only for participation in the government (for "exercising power"), but not for seizing power. In these circumstances, the Socialists sought to observe the rules of political game imposed on them by their bourgeois allies. They were prepared to carry out reforms within the narrow limits established by these rules. This mechanistic concept, according to which the historical process consisted of separate, disconnected phases, served to justify the Socialist party's gradual capitulation to the bourgeoisie and its repudiation of the fight for further transformation urged by the Communists.

The communist ministers were increasingly regarded as an obstacle on the way to implementing the plans forged by the bourgeois parties, which strove after strengthening the capitalist system. Likewise, they were regarded as an obstacle on the way to implement the policy mapped out by the Socialists who described themselves to be champions of democracy and the true advocates of the interests of their supporters from among the factory and office workers and the petty bourgeoisie.

Taking advantage of the fact that on May 4, 1947 during the vote of confidence taken on a particular question the communist deputies, including communist ministers, cast their votes against the government headed by the Socialist Paul Ramadier, President Vincent Auriol, a Socialist, too, decreed the removal of the communist ministers from their posts and appointed Socialists and Radicals to their offices. This measure signified not only the expulsion of the Communists from the government, but also the SFIO leaders' final repudiation of co-operation with the French Communist Party and the unity of action of the working class. The right-wing Socialists preferred an alignment with the bourgeois parties to the co-operation with the Communists maintained in the name of defending the working people's interests. The removal of the Communists mated impending dangers, in particular, the danger of the US support to the French bourgeoisie and failed to timely mobilise all its forces in order to foil the anti-communist plot.¹

¹ *Cahiers du communisme*, No. 11, 1947, pp. 1116-1117.

The bourgeoisie played up on the rightward shift so as to try to liquidate, relying in this on the economic support from the United States, the democratic gains of the working class and deal a blow at its vanguard, the FCP. The removal of the Communists from the government signalled the beginning of a vicious anti-communist campaign and a purge that swept all government institutions.

Another consequence of the rightward shift was a rise in prices which the new government did not try to prevent. In the second half of 1947, the prices grew by 51 per cent. This brought about a string of strikes. The strikes of protests against the expulsion of the Communists from the government were launched in May 1947, swept the entire country and reached their apex in October-December, when they involved nearly 2,500,000 people. The national strike committee set up by the CGT demanded systematic rises in wages and the payment of temporary allowances to compensate for the rise in prices. The government mustered a force of 80,000 soldiers to be used against the strikers. In the autumn of 1948, the troops and the gendarmes were thrown against the miners' strike. The bourgeoisie's onslaught was facilitated by a split in the CGT and by the setting up of a reformist trade union centre, *la Force ouvrière*, which aligned with the Socialists and refused to support the strikes on a plea of their "political" nature.

In the "third force" bloc, which united the Socialists, the Popular Republic Movement (*Mouvement Republicain Populaire*, MRP) and the Radicals, and replaced, in 1947, the coalition government where some of the posts belonged to Communists, the centre of gravity increasingly shifted rightwards. In the end of 1947, the office of the head of government passed from SFIO to the MRP. In the 1950s, the right-wing parties, including de Gaulle's *Rassemblement du Peuple Français* (RPF) played an increasingly important role in coalition governments. The motley composition of these coalitions accounted for frequent government crises.

In 1951, in a bid to undermine the FCP's positions, the bourgeois parties and the SFLO, which formed an anti-communist bloc, effected a change in the election system—a party or a bloc of parties, which succeeded in gaining more than 50 per cent of the votes, were to receive all the given constituency's seats. The bitter anti-communist campaign resulted in the FCP losing 500,000 voters; under the new election law it lost 74 out of 179 seats it previously held in parliament. The next step taken by the ruling circles in 1952 was to arrest some of the FCP and CGT leaders on a charge of organising conspiracy. In fact, it was an attempt to ban the Communist party. Banking on the trial, the right forces succeeded in limiting some of the rights granted to parliament (where the

Communists had a strong faction) and the extension of the powers vested in the president and the government.

The SFIO's participation in bourgeois governments and its contribution to the anti-communist campaign did not earn it a wreath of laurels. Despite the Socialists' attempts to claim services to the cause of defending democracy and establishing the minimum wages level, their influence was declining. In the 1951 parliamentary elections they won only 14.5 per cent of the votes as against 23 per cent in 1945. By the mid-50s, the SFIO membership had dropped to 100,000. The party's waning authority revealed the bankruptcy of its "third way" strategy. In the mid-50s, some of the SFIO leaders started to look for a way out of crisis and tried to dissociate themselves from the reactionary forces.

The anti-Communists' attempt to undermine the positions of the FCP failed. The Communist Party remained, despite a certain reduction in its membership, the country's strongest political party. In the mid-50s it numbered nearly 500,000 members and won about 5,000,000 (26.5 per cent) votes at the elections (as against 26.1 per cent in 1945). The CGT still led the majority of organised workers. While organising the struggle for stronger peace and against encroachments upon national sovereignty, the Communists championed proletarian internationalism. They declared: "*The French people will never, never fight against the Soviet Union.*"¹

In a context when the right-wing parties and the SFIO, using all means to instill anti-Soviet and anti-Communist sentiments, sought political isolation of the FCP, the Communists succeeded in organising a series of mass anti-war demonstrations and strikes. The French public was anxious about the cold war and the growing danger of a worldwide nuclear conflict. The FCP led the peace movement, imparted a militant, vigorous spirit to it and involved in it not only a considerable part of the working class but also people from other walks of life. The large-scale campaign to collect signatures under the Stockholm Appeal to ban atomic weapons (in France, the Appeal was signed by 14,000,000 people) was followed by many other political campaigns: against the dirty war in Vietnam, against the NATO, against the remilitarisation of West Germany and ratification of the Treaty on the European Defence Community (1953-1954). The failure of the EDC plan was largely a result of the large-scale movement which touched off an acute political crisis.

Powerful political strikes and campaigns (such as the campaign against the visit of General Ridgway, Supreme Allied Commander Europe, to Paris, the campaign to stop trains carrying ammunition,

¹ Maurice Thorez, *Fils du peuple*, Paris, 1949, p. 234.

etc.) were organised with an active participation of the working people. However, they did not always find support among the less politically mature masses. For instance, the attempt to carry out a general strike in February and then in June 1952 under purely political slogans failed.

Simultaneously with the political action taken by advanced workers and democrats there unfolded a large-scale strike movement advancing economic slogans.

The greatest number of organised workers participated in the strikes carried out between 1947 and 1952. At the turn of the 50s, the trade unions avoided general strikes. Strikes were only announced in individual industries (the miners' or the metal-workers' "days of demands" may be recalled, for instance). The change in tactics was prompted by the desire to guard the workers against privation and repression.

The years-long discontent erupted in an impressive national strike in August 1953. The immediate cause of the strike was the Laniel government's extraordinary decrees spearheaded primarily against the factory and office workers employed at public enterprises. Unity-of-actions committees were set up at the enterprises whose workers went on strike. The powerful campaign of concerted actions, rising from below and bringing down the political and trade union barriers separating the working class forced the ruling circles to satisfy the strikers' demands.

The general strike which flared up in August 1953 was not quite expected by the Communists. The Thirteenth FCP Congress held in June 1954, criticised the mistakes committed by the party, in particular its tendency to engage in purely parliamentary activity which distracted attention from the work among the masses, especially at enterprises.¹

In the mid-50s the domestic political situation in France was rather complicated and contradictory. The popular masses were increasingly displeased with the government's socio-economic policy, the ministerial reshufflings and the foreign policy pursued by their country which passively took the US lead. At the same time, the profound split in the working class, part of which was paralysed by the "third force" strategy, prevented it from making an effective use of its militant potential. The country was exhausted by the colonial wars waged first in Indochina and then in Algeria, by the ruling circles' futile efforts to retain their control over other colonies, by France's participation in the arms race, by endless disputes and contradictions among the bourgeois parties (which in various combinations—with or without the Socialists—formed government coa-

¹ *Histoire du Parti communiste français (manuel)*, pp. 556-557.

litions), corruption and degradation in which the regime of the Fourth Republic was increasingly bogged down. Frequent changes and impotence of coalition governments discredited the parliamentary institutions and threatened to undermine the bourgeois-democratic regime as a whole. Meanwhile, the main force that could guarantee democratic freedoms—the politically conscious working class rallied around the Communist Party—had been deprived of the possibility to take an active part in running state affairs.

In *Italy*, the situation was somewhat different. The struggle waged by the masses was facilitated by close co-operation between the Communists and the Socialists, which they maintained, unlike the French Communists and Socialists, up to the mid-50s. This can be accounted for by a longer experience of anti-fascist struggle which stimulated the co-operation of the workers' parties. Another conducive factor was the political nature of the Socialist parties: whereas in France the Socialists were more or less associated with the labour right wing of the working-class movement, in Italy, part of the left-wing trend remained with the Socialist Party and continued to exert a decisive influence on its policy. Lastly, one should take into account the difference in the socio-economic conditions prevailing in France and Italy. In Italy, acute class contradictions stemming from the closely intertwined capitalist and precapitalist methods of exploitation engendered widespread opposition and even revolutionary sentiment not only among the working class, but also among other groups of the working population.

In the 40s, the advocates of a break with the Communists were in the minority among the Socialists. As a result of two splits—in 1947 and 1949—the opponents of unity with the Communists left the Socialist Party. They united in a new party headed by Giuseppe Saragat. Since 1952 it has been known as Italian Social Democratic Party (Partito Socialista Democratico, PSDI). The party never succeeded in gaining any serious influence on the working class. However, the split in the socialist ranks weakened the left and had a negative effect on the situation in the trade union movement. The leaders of the Christian Democratic Party (Partito Democrazia Cristiana, or DC) tried to take advantage of the 1947 split in the socialist ranks in order to remove representatives of the left-wing parties from the government. They succeeded in carrying out their plan in May 1947, several months after their first attempt. A government without Communists and Socialists was presented as a condition for American economic aid to Italy. The practical results of the rightward shift were made possible due to the inordinate caution of the Communist Party, which failed to mo-

bilise the masses to an active struggle against the efforts to disrupt national unity.¹

Since the end of 1947, the Christian Democratic government headed by Alcide de Gasperi incorporated the representatives of the bourgeois Liberal and Republican parties and the Saragat party and assigned to them secondary roles. This centrist bloc, in which the leading role belonged to the DC (increasingly aligned with the monopoly capital), served as a basis for the consecutive governments of the late 40s and the 50s. While seeking to formally dissociate itself both from the extreme left and the extreme right, the bloc spearheaded its policy against the Communists and their allies.

On the eve of the election to the first parliament of the Italian Republic (April 18, 1948), the Communists accepted the ISP's proposal on setting up a Popular Democratic Front (PDF) on the basis of the two parties and some smaller progressive organisations. The task of the Front was to urge the working class to close its ranks and to rally around it other groups of the working people. The Sixth ICP Congress (January 1948) reiterated that it was necessary to continue the struggle, in the new circumstances, for progressive democracy and structural reforms in Italian society.

The setting up of the PDF was interpreted by the reaction as evidence of the Communist Party's "preparations for the seizure of power". The country witnessed extreme polarisation of social forces. The centrist bloc, rallied around the DC and opposed to the PDF did not shun any means to prevent the left-wing parties from gaining victory. Intimidating the voters with the possibility of forfeiting US aid and facing a civil war in the case the PDF emerged victorious was the most effective method among all those used by the government bloc in the election campaign.

US interference in Italy's internal affairs was another factor that influenced the course of the election campaign. Material that was subsequently disclosed in the United States concerning the CIA illegal activity abroad showed that since 1947 it had been rendering financial support to the "anti-communist" parties in Italy.² The CIA acted on the instructions from President Truman who urged to make a full use of the US political, economic and, if need be, military potential in order not to allow the Communists to come to power in Western Europe. The January 1948 agreement on granting US "temporary aid" to Italy was played on by the propaganda media. Sops and promises were accompanied by intima-

¹ *La politica dei comunisti dal quinto al sesto congresso*, Roma, 1947, p. 385.

² *L'Unità*, January 27, 1976.

tion. The withdrawal of the US troops still remaining in Italy was delayed and in January 1948 US naval forces started to arrive at Italian ports.¹

At the April 1948 elections, the bloc of government parties won the majority of votes, namely 16,000,000. About 12,700,000, or 48.4 per cent of them, were gained by the Christian Democratic Party. Thus, the bourgeoisie established this party's political monopoly and was able to continue its onslaught against the working people, above all, the ICP. Nonetheless, the 8,100,000 votes (31 per cent of the total number of votes) cast for the Popular Democratic Front showed that this onslaught was going to meet with a serious rebuff.

It was against the background of the pre-election anti-communist hysteria that on July 14, 1948, the reactionary forces organised an attempt on the life of Palmiro Togliatti, the ICP General Secretary. The attempt outraged the masses. Millions of people came out onto the streets. On July 14-16, 1948, a strike of protest swept the country. However, the ICP leaders realised that the people's indignation with the crime committed by the reaction did not signify the preparedness of the majority of the working people to come out against the CDP's political monopoly and urge progressive democracy. The Communists focused their efforts on mobilising the working people to rebuff the attempts to revise the democratic gains of the Resistance and fight for their rights and interests.

The ICP was in the vanguard of the progressive forces, which, relying on the Constitution, opposed the Christian Democrats and their allies and persistently urged far-reaching socio-economic reforms. The expulsion of the Communists from the government was followed by a sharp rise in the number of strikes. The 3,000 strikes called in 1947 involved 8,000,000 workers. In 1948-1953 an average annual number of people participating in the strikes ran to 7,200,000.

The Communists succeeded in providing leadership to the spontaneous peasants' movement. Peasants seized untilled land belonging to landlords and set up co-operatives to cultivate it. Bloody clashes between the peasants and the police were quite frequent. The delegates elected by the peasants to the Constituent Land Assembly convened on the Communists' initiative mapped out a programme of a democratic agrarian reform envisaging elimination of landed estates. The peasants' mass struggle vigorously supported by the working class forced the Christian Democrats to effect, in 1950-1951, an agrarian reform which set certain limits to landed estates. Moreover, a considerable number of the working people, among

¹ *History of Italy*, Vol. 3, op. cit., p. 277.

them farm hands, succeeded in raising wages and getting an eight-hour work-day. In 1950, Parliament passed a law on setting up a special fund (Cassa del Mezzogiorno) earmarked for public projects in the backward districts in the South of Italy.

Among the achievements gained by the working-class movement in Italy was the elaboration of the idea of nationwide economic planning. In 1950, the Italian General Confederation of Labour (Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro, CGIL) drew up a Labour Plan, i.e. a programme for economic development envisaging an improvement in the working people's condition. The plan stipulated partial nationalisation and a broader state participation in defending the national industry and preventing closures. The implementation of the Plan, opposed by Parliament, became a slogan of the workers who demanded to eliminate poverty and unemployment. The campaign to implement the Plan involved a series of "work-ins" when the unemployed undertook, on their own initiative and under the guidance of trade unions, such public projects as the construction of dams, laying canals or digging foundation pits. On completing the work, they demanded a pay from the authorities. Thus, the defence of the working people's interests was combined with the campaign to secure economic development, especially in the most backward regions.

The popular movement was unfolding against a background of discrimination against the progressive elements, police repressions and assassinations carried out by the mafia and the neofascists. Between early 1948 and mid-1950 alone 62 people were killed (48 of them were Communists); 3,162 were wounded (including 2,367 Communists) and 92,169 people (of whom 73,780 were Communists) were arrested.¹

The working people's struggle was also hampered by the split in the CGIL. The wedge in its ranks was driven with a direct assistance from the US labour union leaders who acted in collaboration with the CIA. In 1948, the Catholic faction left the CGIL having differed with its leaders on the issue of the political strike called in token of protest against the attempt on the life of Palmiro Togliatti, and set up the Italian Confederation of Working People's Trade Unions (Confederazione Italiana Sindacati Lavoratori, or CISL). In 1950, the Social Democrats and the Republicans dissociated themselves from the CGIL and founded the Italian Labour Union (Unione Italiana del Lavoro, or UIL). The emergent trade union centres had an anti-communist orientation and were therefore granted financial support by the United States. In the late 40s and early

¹ *Thirty Years of the Life and Struggle of the Italian Communist Party*, Moscow, 1953, pp. 569-570 (in Russian).

50s, the employers made efforts to circumvent the CGIL and conclude collective agreements with the newly set-up reformist trade union centres. Nonetheless, the CGIL retained its influence on the majority of workers. In some cases the CISL and the UIL were forced, under mass pressure, to make common cause with the CGIL. However, they flatly refused to participate in political strikes.

For all that, political struggle constituted the most important part of the workers' mass movement in Italy. In 1949, in the course of a large-scale campaign organised on the Communists' initiative, 8,000,000 Italians protested against their country's joining NATO. Over 17,000,000 people—a record number of people in the European capitalist countries—signed the Stockholm Peace Appeal. A large-scale protest campaign, which included rallies, demonstrations and strikes, was triggered by the undemocratic election law passed by the government majority in Parliament on the eve of the 1953 election. Under this law, the party or the bloc of parties which succeeded in winning more than 50 per cent of the votes was to be granted two-thirds of the parliamentary seats. This threatened the principles of democratic representation laid down by the Constitution which, as was mentioned above, had been drawn up under the influence of the traditions of the anti-fascist movement. The left-wing forces could thus be reduced to an opposition helpless in the face of the Christian Democrats' political monopoly.

The Italian Communists who headed the working people's struggle against the fraudulent law, helped to remove this threat. At the election held on June 7, 1953, the government bloc gained less than 50 per cent of the votes. The fraudulent law could not be applied and was subsequently repealed by Parliament. The Christian Democrats gained only 40 per cent of the votes, while the two workers' parties (on this occasion each of them acted independently) won 35.4 per cent of the votes, i.e. 1,700,000 more than in 1948. 22.6 per cent of the votes were cast for the ICP (as against 19 per cent in 1946). The 1953 election signalled the first major setback to be suffered by the ruling centrist bloc.

However, the left-wing forces were in no position to further the success scored in 1953. The situation remained complicated. The nascent economic upswing enabled some of the major monopolies, such as FIAT and Olivetti, which seized extremely favourable positions on the world market, to soften the antagonisms by raising wages at their enterprises. At FIAT enterprises company unions were set up. While their members were encouraged and placed in a privileged position by the management, the Communists, the Socialists and CGIL members were kept under surveillance and discriminated against. As a result, in 1955 the left suffered a series of major setbacks at some of the largest enterprises in Northern Italy.

The CGIL's influence in this industrial area noticeably waned. The FIAT plants entered upon a long period without strikes.

The setbacks that followed the 1953 successes can be explained chiefly by the fact that the left failed to timely assess and take into account the economic and social changes that had occurred by the mid-50s as the economic development rates started to grow. An analysis of these changes provided by the Eighth ICP Congress held in December 1956 helped the Communists to make amendments in their party's strategy and tactics.¹

Despite the difficulties and the counter-action of domestic and international reaction, the communist movement remained the most influential trend in the labour movement in France and Italy. The Communist parties here secured for themselves an important place in political life and that was an earnest of subsequent successes of the left-wing forces. The workers strove for new gains and scored certain successes without confining themselves to defensive tactics.

The working-class movement in *Japan* in the late 40s and first half of the 50s was marked by great specificity. The rapid development of the democratic and labour movement in the early post-war years brought about qualitative changes in the political situation in the country and undermined the political monopoly of the reactionary bourgeois circles characteristic of the pre-war years. The working class became unprecedentedly well-organised: in 1949, trade unions involved more than 50 per cent of all factory and office workers.² The Communist Party,³ which by that time had come out of the underground, enjoyed a membership of over 100,000 and won more than 3,000,000 votes (10 per cent) and 35 mandates at the 1949 parliamentary election. In the late 40s, the Communist Party launched a struggle for Japan's national independence and for the vital rights of its people, organised a campaign to secure higher wages and protest against repressions and scored considerable successes in organising the youth and women's movements. The party had an active role to play in expanding the struggle for peace. It consolidated its ties with the masses, strongly opposed the policies pursued by the occupation authorities and the ruling circles and especially the latter's alliance with the US imperialists. The Communist Party strongly opposed the aggression in Korea which was unleashed by the US imperialists in 1950 with the approval and support from the Japanese ruling circles. The Communists resolutely protested against Japan's remilitarisation.

¹ *Partito comunista d'Italia Congresso 8*, Rome, 1956.

² *Japan Economic Year Book*. Tokyo, 1960, p. 91.

³ *Modern Japan (1945-1975). A Handbook*, Moscow, 1968, p. 327 (in Russian).

The Socialist Party, which had a fairly strong left wing, enjoyed even greater influence.

However, the situation that conduced to the successes of the left did not last long. This can be accounted for the weaknesses that ravaged the working-class movement: the gap between the levels of political consciousness and organisation of the workers employed on the smaller and the larger enterprises, the fragmentation of the trade union movement, instability and hesitation that highlighted the membership of workers' parties. The latter was due to the lack of experience and traditions of struggle in a context of bourgeois democracy and, more importantly, to the contradictory and complicated nature of the process of political maturing of the working class in a society whose ideology and mentality were still dominated by the traditions of the pre-capitalist past.

The reactionary forces played on the labour movement's weaknesses in the campaign they launched in the late 40s. Reaction's onslaught was supported by the United States which continued to occupy Japan until 1952. US interference grew as the war in Korea went on. However, the positions gained by the labour movement in the post-war years were strong enough to help the workers to hold out and not to be forced back to the pre-war positions. The successes scored by the reactionaries were temporary and could only slow down the development of the powerful left-wing forces. Nothing could prevent them from going from strength to strength.

The first move to signal the reactionary offensive was the banning of the general political strike scheduled for February 1, 1947 by the US occupation authorities. The aim of the strike was to force Yoshida's conservative government to resign. In mid-1948, on the instructions from General MacArthur, Supreme Commander for Allied Powers, Prime Minister Ashida issued directive No. 201 which went down in the history of the working-class movement as the "black directive". Under this anti-labour act (which is still in force) all those employed at state and social enterprises and establishments have been deprived, in violation of the Constitution, of the right to strike.

Just as was the case in Italy, the overtly anti-communist campaign culminated in an attempt on the life of the Communist Party leader, Kiyuichi Tokuda. In the spring of 1949, the government issued an extraordinary decree under which the Communist Party was ranked with the organisations upholding violence and was thus to be subjected to persecution. The decree gave a fresh impetus to the repression against the Communist Party.

General MacArthur's special order banned the political activity of 24 members of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Japan, the publication of the newspaper *Akahata* and other com-

unist periodicals. The National Liaison Council of Trade Unions was disbanded. The purge involved mass dismissals of Communists, of the more active trade unionists and the leaders of the labour movement. Thousands of people were put down on the black list and lost their jobs. The Communist Party had to function in semi-legal conditions.¹ The period between 1950 and 1955 was one of the most difficult ones in the history of the CPJ. The controversy that surfaced already in 1950 prevented it from forging a correct strategic and tactical line. Ravaged by the intra-mural wrangling, the CPJ was in no position to effectively counter the repression. Its positions in the trade union movement were strongly undermined. The party committed a series of grave tactical mistakes of the right-wing legalistic, left-wing opportunist and sectarian character by concentrating its attacks on the Socialist Party.²

All this accounts for the fact that, in the early 50s, strongly weakened, the CPJ lost an appreciable number of its members and voters, largely forfeited its positions in the country and failed to correct its mistakes. The 5th CPJ Conference held in July 1955 helped overcome the mistakes committed in the past and laid the stage for restoring the party's unity and for a radical improvement in the methods of work among the masses. The Conference strongly criticised the extreme left-wing adventurist and sectarian tendencies. In this connection, special importance was to be attached to a correct approach to the trade unions and the struggle for their unity with the object of safeguarding the working people's immediate demands. This conduced to the consolidation of the working-class movement.³

Unlike the Communist Party, the Socialist Party did not suffer to any great extent from the repression unleashed in the late 40s and early 50s. However, its authority was appreciably impaired by its unsuccessful participation in the government in 1948, when, under the influence of Tetsu Katayama and other Socialist leaders, it took an opportunist stand and entered into co-operation with bourgeois parties. In the early 50s the SPJ forfeited its former influence and was facing a crisis. In 1950-1951, the right-wing Socialists who favoured closer co-operation with bourgeois parties drove a wedge in the Socialist ranks and set up a right-wing Socialist Party. This further weakened the socialist movement and enhanced the fragmentation of trade unions. However, in 1955, the SPJ's unity was restored on the platform of struggle for democracy, national indepen-

¹ *The History of Japan. 1945-1975*, Moscow, 1978, pp. 79-80 (in Russian).

² *The Seventh Congress of the Communist Party of Japan*, Moscow, 1959, pp. 98-100, 104-105, 108, 113 (in Russian).

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 57, 114, 117-118.

dence, working people's well-being and universal peace. Following their reunification, the Japanese Socialists took an active part in the campaign to ban nuclear weapons and urged to normalise relations with the USSR and the People's Republic of China. This accounted for the SPJ's major victory at the 1955 parliamentary election. Although the party's ideological and political stand was rather vague, on the whole it sought to promote the interests of the working people. In the second half of the 50s, it called for radical social reforms.

All this signified the setback of the reactionary forces which in the 50s made every effort to stabilise the bourgeois regime, advocate class co-operation and Americanise the working-class movement. The Japanese reactionary forces played the US card in a bid to make a fuller use of the assistance granted to them by that mighty and victorious power. Under the San Francisco Peace Treaty and the US-Japan Security Treaty (1951-1952) the United States retained and expanded their bases on the Japanese Islands and the US troops were in a position to interfere, if need be, into Japan's internal affairs.

The year of 1950 saw an upswing in the Japanese economy caused by military orders from the US army. Over the first year of the war in Korea Japan's industrial production grew by nearly 50 per cent. The Japanese ruling circles sought to ascribe to themselves the success in promoting the Japanese "economic miracle" and to play on it in an effort to enhance their influence upon the masses who also benefited, to a certain extent, from the rise in industrial production. It is in these years that the doctrines treating of "smoothing out class antagonisms", of subsidence of class struggles and "universal well-being", etc. were circulated among the working class. They especially affected the more backward groups of the proletariat. These groups, along with the peasantry, supported the bourgeois Liberal-Democratic Party, whose success was promoted both by the considerations of the moment, and the attractiveness of the "law and order" slogan in the eyes of people.

However, the slogans of class collaboration and the invitation to share in the benefits of the "economic miracle" at the cost of abandoning the struggle against the monopolies and against dependence on the United States failed to have a lasting effect on the considerable and most active part of the working class. This is testified to by the evolution of the Socialist Party and by the history of the trade union movement in the period under the consideration.

The trade unions withstood the counter-attacks launched by the right-wing forces and grew stronger. Admittedly, in the early 50s, particularly in 1951, their membership witnessed a certain reduction. However, already in 1955, the membership achieved and then sur-

passed the 1949 level. In the mid-50s some 40 per cent of all factory and office workers were associated in trade unions. The largest trade union centre was the General Council of Trade Unions of Japan (SOHYO), set up in 1950.¹ The US occupation authorities, the Japanese government and the monopolies welcomed its foundation. They pinned great hopes on the SOHYO, regarding it as a force capable of leading the labour movement along the road of compromise. However, their hopes were frustrated. At its Second Congress held in March 1951, the SOHYO, pressurised by the left-wing trade unions, repudiated the attempts to saddle it with a reactionary policy and opted for the road of struggle for the working people's interests. The Congress strongly condemned the US aggression in Korea and proclaimed "four principles of peace" which envisaged a struggle against the US intention to conclude a separate peace treaty, against Japan's rearmament against US military bases on the Japanese territory and for an independent foreign policy.²

The reformist trade union association—the All-Japan Congress of Trade Unions (ZENRO)—set up in 1954 was designed to counter-balance the SOHYO. However, it incorporated a minority of trade unions and the SOHYO retained dominant positions in the trade union movement.

Even in the early 50s, the period marked by brutal repression, a split in the working class and by the weakening of its organisations, the number of strikers varied—from 1,400,000 to 1,300,000 a year. The strikes, carried out under political slogans, were spear-headed against the right-wing forces against the anti-trade union campaign and against the efforts to revive monopolies. In 1953-1954, some of the trade unions tended to direct their efforts at promoting the solidarity of workers in the given locality, rather than at encouraging their mutual assistance within an industry. This imparted a regional character to the strikes and led to the general underestimation of nationwide campaigns. As a result, the strikes became less effective. However, by the mid-50s, the range of the demands advanced by the working people had broadened, the struggle assumed a militant character and the strike movement intensified. This can be explained by the growth in the trade union membership, the greater unity of the trade union movement and by the fact that the internal difficulties faced by the CPJ and SPJ had been overcome.

The strikes were not the only form of the mass movement. In 1952, for instance, impressive May Day demonstrations were held.

¹ P. P. Topekha, *The Working-Class Movement in Japan in 1945-1971*, Moscow, 1973, p. 81 (in Russian).

² See: *SOHYO junenshi*, Tokyo, 1964, pp. 247-268.

In Tokyo, 500,000 people came out into the streets. The posters and banners they carried read: "Down with rearmament!", "Let us defend peace and national independence!". The police attacked the demonstrators. Two of the latter were killed and 1,400 wounded.¹ These events, which took place in the period of mass strikes against the Subversive Activity Bill and which involved 3,000,000 participants testified to the people's determination to consolidate Japan's independence after the occupation regime was repealed. In 1953, the country was swept by a mass campaign against the revival of militarism, against the threat of a new world war, and for peace.

In December 1954, 34,000,000 Japanese signed the Appeal of the World Peace Council calling to ban nuclear weapons. A Japanese Council for Banning Atomic and Hydrogen Weapons was founded. The tendency towards the consolidation of all progressive forces manifested itself at the All-Japan Workers' and Peasants' Conference convened by the SOHYO in 1953. The All-Japan Council for Defence of the Constitution, set up in 1954, involved many workers' and democratic organisations. The Council's activity hampered the right-wing attempts to revise the Constitution. The progressives succeeded in getting Yoshida's reactionary government resigned. The new government, headed by Ichiro Hatoyama restored diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union.²

Just as was the case in France and Italy, the Japanese reaction's counter-attack failed. The working-class movement was not forced back to the pre-war positions. In the mid-50s, the left-wing forces regrouped their ranks and regained their influence upon the masses, thus creating prerequisites for the large-scale popular action that swept France, Italy and Japan in the late 50s and the early 60s.

THE LABOUR MOVEMENT IN OTHER DEVELOPED CAPITALIST COUNTRIES

Less impressive successes were scored by the working class in those countries where the positions of the labour movement were weakened by the bourgeois (in the United States) or reformist (in Britain and West Germany) ideology.

In the *United States*, the labour movement found itself in an especially complicated situation. The US imperialists enjoyed sufficient political and economic power to counteract the working class which had no mass political organisation of its own and was affected by bourgeois ideology.

¹ P. P. Topekha, op. cit., p. 87.

² Ibid., pp. 100-101.

The end of the war signalled a large-scale reactionary forces' encroachment on the rights of the American workers and on the achievements gained by the latter during the pre-war and war years. The extreme conservatives, promoting the interests of Big Business, fattened on the war orders, demanded to put an end to the New Deal.

At the end of 1946 and the beginning of 1947, the anti-union campaign reached its climax. A series of polls conducted in 1946 among the employers showed that in their opinion unions had turned into a serious factor checking private initiative.¹ In the post-war years the conservatively-minded bourgeois ideologists were unanimous in the opinion that the existing methods of state labour regulation, just as social legislation, relieved the workers' organisations from any responsibility for their actions.

The period of 1945-1947 saw the invigorated activity of US Congress various committees charged with drafting reactionary labour laws. At the 1946 interim elections, the Republican Party gained majority in both houses of Congress. This enabled the coalition, made up of Republicans and the conservative Democrats from among the Southerners to establish their control over the legislation policy. In the opinion of US Communists, the anti-union Taft-Hartley Act adopted in June 1947 by the reactionary majority of Congressmen meant that "the American labor movement has suffered its single greatest blow in legislative history".²

The Taft-Hartley Act was based on the principle of the direct state regulation of labour relations. It reflected the drive to "integrate" the trade unions, i.e. to do away with their independence and turn them into a "department" of the monopoly-controlled state acting on the instructions from the government and responsible for every slight breach of these instructions. In reaching for this goal the authors of the new statute applied two methods. On the one hand, the union activity, ranging from collective bargaining to setting up pension funds for union members, was strictly regulated. On the other hand, all aspects of the relations between the employers and the unions were placed under day-to-day control of special administrative bodies.

Under the Taft-Hartley Act, the principle of "unfair labour practice" which earlier, under the Wagner Act, had been applied only to the employers, was spread to the unions. Classed with "unfair practice" were the following kinds of union activity: refusal to participate in collective bargaining, demands to include the "closed

¹ R. A. Lester, *Company Wage Policies. A Survey of Patterns and Experience*, Princeton, 1948.

² *Political Affairs*, Vol. XXVI, No. 8, 1947, p. 702.

shop"¹ item in the collective agreement, organisation of secondary boycotts, participation in the strikes in violation of contracts, collection of inordinately high entrance fees, etc. The Act considerably limited American workers' right to strike. Civil servants' strikes were prohibited altogether. In the case where a strike "created a threat to national interests", the US President was entitled to ban it for a period of up to 80 days. The unions calling a strike in violation of any provision of the Act forfeited all rights to be defended against the "unfair labour practice" on the part of the employers and might be prosecuted.

The state set limits to the union's political struggles and undertook to ensure the "purity" of American workers' organisations by demanding from trade union leaders a yearly signed statement of their non-participation in the Communist Party of the USA.

The Taft-Hartley Act encouraged anti-union legislation in the states. By September 1947, according to the US Labor Department, the so-called right to work acts banning closed and union shops agreements had been adopted in 14 states. It is no accident that US workers nicknamed the Taft-Hartley Act "a slave-labor charter".

The Federal authorities' interference in the internal affairs of workers' organisations was accompanied by civil and political discrimination against Communists, liberals and all other progressive elements. The orgy of extreme reaction and chauvinism that swept the United States in the first half of the 50s was dubbed "McCarthyism", after the Republican Senator Joseph McCarthy who headed the crusade against the "subversive elements". To quote from the resolution adopted by the 16th Convention of the Communist Party USA, "this policy had its domestic counterpart in the smog of intimidation and conformity that polluted American life, in the persecutions, repressions and witchhunts that steadily eroded the Bill of Rights".² Juridically, the foundation for this policy was laid by President Truman's "checkup on the loyalty" instructions of March 22, 1947, according to which all radicals and all persons who did not please the right forces were to be expelled from government bodies.

In the summer of 1948, more than 100 left-wing public figures, including 12 leaders of the Communist Party (which was reconstituted in 1945), were brought to trial. During the US imperialist intervention in Korea, a whole series of anti-labour laws was adopt-

¹ "Closed shop" is a provision of the collective agreement binding the employer to hire only the members of the given union. In the United States, the implementation of this provision was the most reliable guarantee of trade union rights at an enterprise.

² *Communist Party, USA. 16th National Convention*, New York, 1957, p. 261.

ed, among them the McCarran-Wood Internal Security Act of 1950. The Subversive Activities Control Board set up under the McCarran-Wood Security Act was charged with conducting thorough investigations into "Communist activity", and, discovering and registering "Communist front" organisations. One of the articles of the McCarran-Wood Security Act envisaged a fine of \$10,000, or five years of imprisonment, or both for the refusal of a person or an organisation belonging to the "Communist front" to register with the Law Department.

In August 1954, an amendment to the McCarran-Wood Law, known as the Communist Control Act, was passed. The CP USA was outlawed and deprived of any rights, privileges and immunity usually granted to the organisations founded in keeping with US legislation.

In the context of the anti-communist hysteria stirred up by Senator Joseph McCarthy, or the persecution and victimisation of all differently-minded, some of the Communists were forced to go underground. All this weakened the Communist Party and other progressive organisations and hampered the activity of trade unions, especially that of the union left wing. "Most of the trade union leaders chose to retreat and conform and, thereby began the prolonged period of stagnation and further losses..."¹ By the end of 1948 more than 80,000 union functionaries had complied with the provisions of the Taft-Hartley Act and borne affidavits to their non-affiliation to the Communist Party. That signified the trade union leaders' recognition of the Act, as well as their refusal to campaign for its abrogation.

The political weakness of the labour movement conduced to the victory of the reactionary course in the post-war United States. The US working class failed to attain the necessary level of organised protest against anti-labour legislation. As a result, the reactionaries succeeded in saddling it with the Taft-Hartley Act. That meant "a major setback for the US working masses".²

Since the early days following the enforcement of the Taft-Hartley Act the leaders of the AFL and CIO sought to reduce the grass-roots worker organisations' counteraction to the Act with purely "parliamentary" forms of activity. They launched a campaign against those Congressmen who had voted for the Act. At the same time, the right-wing reformist union leaders (who in the early post-war years advocated the ideas of "class peace" and "community of national interests") became involved in the anti-communist crusade, propagated the cold war against the socialist countries. As a result

¹ G. Morris, *American Labor—Which Way?*, New York, 1961, p. 47.

² *The Recent History of the US Working-Class Movement*, Vol. 2, (1939-1965), Moscow, 1971, p. 214 (in Russian).

of the strengthening of its right wing, the Congress of Industrial Organisations (which before the war was in the vanguard of the workers' struggle) found itself involved in the anti-communist campaign. In 1948, its leader, Philip Murray, declared that there was no room for Communists in the CIO. In 1946-1949, the CIO leaders succeeded in expelling from the CIO those major trade unions whose leaders held left-wing views.

While allowing the bourgeoisie to establish its ideological and political hegemony over the US working class, the right-wing AFL and CIO leaders involved their organisations in purely economic struggle against the employers, the struggle for material concessions. The increased membership and greater organisational strength of the trade unions, as well as considerable strike funds at their disposal, enabled them to engage in sustained struggles and to resist the employers' offensive. In 1949 alone, the number of man-days lost due to strikes ran to more than 50,500,000 and in 1952, to 58,100,000.¹

Of all major organisations, only the miners' and printing-house workers' unions refused to make signed statements testifying to their leaders' non-affiliation of the Communist Party. In 1948-1949, they joined the Railroad Brotherhoods in organising a series of large-scale strikes to protest against the main provisions of the Taft-Hartley Act, in particular, against the "closed shop" ban.² These strikes revealed the anti-union orientation and the anti-labour essence of the new labour laws. The strength of the above-mentioned trade unions lay in their uniting practically all the workers in the given trade or industry. This accounted for the stubborn and consistent resistance offered by these unions, and for the courage and determination of their leaders. But for the Taft-Hartley Act and the well-organised force of the state machinery, the employers could have hardly held out.

The state's onslaught on the trade union rights resulted in the AFL-CIO merger in 1955. The fact that most trade unions were united in a single association—the AFL-CIO—with a membership of 16,000,000³ enabled them to be more efficient in defending the rights of trade union organisations and promoting workers' demands. At the same time, the fact that the merger took place largely on the AFL platform strengthened the right-wing reformist trend in the US trade union movement.

In the context of persecution, witchhunts and slander campaigns aimed at isolating the Communists, the latter continued to

¹ *Statistical Abstract of the United States. 1954*, p. 228.

² *The Recent History of the US Working-Class Movement*, Vol. 2, op. cit., p. 213.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 313.

hold the banner of the workers' political struggle in their hands. During the 1948 election campaign, the Communists vigorously supported the setting up of the Labour-Progressive Party which opposed the Truman administration's domestic policies and demanded to repeal the anti-labour Taft-Hartley Act, repudiate the cold war policy and establish friendly relations with the Soviet Union. At the presidential elections, Henry Wallace, the candidate of the Labour-Progressive Party, won more than 1,000,000 votes.

The Communist Party and the left-wing trade unions expelled from the CIO wrote down many glorious pages in the history of the struggle against McCarthyism and for expanding the peace movement. In 1950, the Communist Party assisted in setting up the Peace Champions' Information Centre headed by the prominent scientist William Dubois. The Stockholm Appeal was signed by 2,500,000 Americans. The Communists maintained ties with the democratic organisations which came out against McCarthyism and campaigned for peace, among them the American Women for Peace, American Peace Crusade, and American Civil Liberties Union. Nevertheless, due to the most unfavourable conditions obtaining in the country in those years, the Communist Party's struggle to free the working people from the ideological influence of imperialism could only yield limited results.

The years of the Second World War and the early post-war years constituted an important stage in the development of the labour and trade union movements in *Canada*. This period saw the emergence of trade unions in a number of key industries (among them, automobile, aviation, metallurgical, electrical engineering, and chemical industries). Between 1939 and 1949 trade union membership grew from 359,000 to 1,000,000.¹ The labour movement was on the rise. The process was accompanied by the weakening of the right-wing opportunists' positions within it. In 1945-1947, the Communists and the Social Democrats enjoyed great influence in trade unions.

A large number of major trade unions, including the Canadian branch of the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers and the United Automobile Workers, found themselves under the influence and leadership of the Communist Party which was reconstituted, in 1943, under the name of the Labour-Progressive Party (LPP). Communists were among the leaders of the large trade unions associated in the Canadian Congress of Labour (CCL). In this period, major successes were also scored by the social democratic movement. They were crowned by the emergence of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF).

¹ *Labour Organisations in Canada*, Ottawa, 1957, p. 9.

In the late 40s and early 50s, Canadian Communists had to offer a stubborn resistance to reaction's onslaught against the democratic and political rights of the working class. The political persecution of the LPP and the trade unions that supported it, unleashed by the Canadian and US big bourgeoisie, was accompanied by an anti-Soviet campaign in the press and by the propaganda of Brauderism in the working-class and trade union movements.

In 1947, the Canadian ruling circles launched a policy aimed at Canadian-US integration, that strongly conduced to the growth of the economic and political influence exerted by US imperialism. In the period in question, the encroachment on the rights of the working class manifested itself in a whole set of anti-labour bills which were copied out from similar anti-labour acts adopted in the United States. With the direct interference from the right-wing leaders of the AFL and CIO, a number of organisations adhering to a progressive stand were expelled from Canadian trade union associations¹; the election of Communists to the leading trade union posts was prohibited; trade union rules were supplemented with articles under which those trade unions that allowed Communists in their ranks automatically forfeited the right to collective bargaining. A complete ban on the Communist Party was put on the agenda.

The situation in the labour movement was aggravated by the traditional division of trade unions among three centres. It was not until 1956 that two of them—the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada and the Canadian Labour Congress—merged to form the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC). This somewhat strengthened the trade union movement, which nonetheless largely retained its former stand.

The early post-war years witnessed an upsurge in the labour movement in *Australia*. The defeat of the German fascism and Japanese militarism conduced to a broader struggle for improving the economic situation and expanding democratic rights. During the war, the left-wing forces grew in their prestige. Progressive public figures were elected leaders of many major trade unions (among them, the dockers', seamen's, metallurgists', railwaymen's and builders' unions). The Communist Party now enjoyed greater influence; the reactionary forces' political positions were seriously weakened, and the Labourites came to power.

It is in this context that the trade unions and the Communist Party demanded to grant more extensive rights in economic manage-

¹ For instance, in 1951, the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers and the United Mine Workers of America were expelled from the Canadian Congress of Labour for being controlled by the Communists. (See H. D. Woods, Silvia Ostry, *Labour Policy and Labour Economics in Canada*, Toronto, 1962, p. 107.)

ment to trade unions. This demand was formulated in the resolutions adopted by the Congress of the Australian Council of Trade Unions held in 1945. The strike movement acquired an unprecedented mass scale, never known in Australia before. Under the pressure from the working people, the Labourites promised to carry out democratic reforms. However, the only measure that was taken was the nationalisation of domestic air lines. The Supreme Court disrupted the attempt to establish state control over private banks.

The upsurge in the mass labour movement met with the resistance from the monopoly capital and the ruling circles. This resulted in the expansion of the forced arbitration system which enabled the government to impose fines on the trade unions involved in "illegal" strikes, imprison trade union leaders, and interfere in trade unions' internal affairs.

At the same time, attempts were made to weaken the labour movement from within. The early post-war years witnessed the activation of "industrial groups" in trade unions and "political groups" in the Labour Party. These groups had close ties with the reactionaries among the top people in the Catholic Church. Their activity, markedly anti-communist, was aimed at ousting the left-wingers from positions of leadership. Although the progressive forces succeeded in getting the upper hand, the above-mentioned groups managed to cause serious damage to the labour movement and to weaken its resistance to the onslaught of the monopoly capital. It is largely owing to their subversive activity that in the early 50s the ruling class succeeded in checking the growth of the labour movement and impeding the working people's struggle to improve their economic and political positions.

In the late 40s and the early 50s, the working-class movement in the *Federal Republic of Germany* was going through a difficult stage. The aftermath of the fascist rule, the exhaustion caused by the war and the country's occupation by the British, French and the US troops encouraged the monopolistic bourgeoisie to assume the offensive.

In the context of the emergence of two German states with opposed social systems, anti-communism which had been maintained among the West German population since the nazi time and fomented by the propaganda allegations about "the horror reigning in the Soviet zone" acquired particularly aggressive forms here. Playing on the fact that the boundary between the two opposed worlds stretched across the territory of a previously united country, the ruling class persistently sought to present social antagonisms as results of the external enemy's "subversive activity". All the official political and social forces hastened to display their anti-communist orientation. Not only the occupation authorities, West German mo-

nopolies and bourgeois parties, but also many of social democratic and trade union leaders came out against the Communists in a practically united front.

The low level of class awareness among the workers largely accounted for the success of bourgeois propaganda efforts and for the reactionary onslaught. The post-war economic disruption and privation suffered by the masses impeded the latter's activity. Commenting on this, Max Reimann wrote: "Poverty endured by the working people has pushed into the background important political and national problems."¹ The improvement in the economic situation in the early 50s was described as the result of the efforts made by the ruling bourgeois circles.

The emergence of a socialist state on the German territory forced the ruling class in the FRG to take a cautious approach to class interrelations and agree to certain concessions in the social area. It sought, however, to use these concessions as a means of working-class "loyalty".

The policy adopted by the ruling class greatly impeded the activity of West German Communists, especially because the blatant anti-communist campaign was accompanied by repression and discrimination practices. As early as 1948, the Communists were removed—with the assistance of the occupation authorities—from all important ministerial posts in the Lands. The purge was subsequently spread to government offices at large. The 1951 law to call to account all those reported to criticise the government gave a new dimension to the persecution against the Communist Party of Germany (CPG). The activity of the Free German Youth League known to have ties with the CPG, and the publication of communist newspapers were banned. In the trade unions, the right-wingers urged to discharge Communists from positions of leadership. Some of the campaigns and demonstrations (among them the nationwide poll conducted to find out the public's attitude to the revival of militarism) were prohibited.

In the context of increasing isolation and unbridled persecution, the CPG did its best to go against the stream and offer stubborn resistance to the pressure. The division of the country in 1948 forced the Communists to set up an independent party on the territory of Western zones. The Communist Party of Germany, organisationally independent from the SUPG, was headed by Max Reimann, a battle-tested fighter against nazism. The Communists came out against the occupation status and persistently called the people to create a united democratic republic. In 1952, they advanced a Programme for the National Reunification of Germany. Rallies and demonstrations in support of the programme swept the country. The

¹ Max Reimann, *Aus Reden und Aufsätzen. 1946-1963*, Berlin, 1963, p. 62.

Bonn Treaty of 1952 and the Paris Agreements of 1954, which paved the way for the militarisation of West Germany, met with the strong protests from West German Communists.

The Communists initiated any of the efforts to defend the working people's immediate interests. They took an active part in the struggle to safeguard the rights of workers at enterprises, to control speculation and combat starvation. In 1951, they convened a trade union conference which demanded to secure for the workers an opportunity to participate in the management of production.¹

The Communist Party was the only party in the FRG to consistently uphold the basic interests of the working class and the national interests of the whole of the people. However, it did not always succeed in co-ordinating its logically consistent and resolute demands and slogans with the sentiments and everyday needs of the majority of the working people. The Communists' wholesale and resolute condemnation of the orders established in West Germany was not always understood by the broad masses of the workers, especially after 1948, when efforts to restore the West German economy were launched and the living conditions of the working people were somewhat improved. The lack of flexibility vis-à-vis the Social Democratic Party of Germany, the excessively straightforward and not always convincing criticism of the latter's policy hampered the efforts to achieve the unity of workers' action sincerely desired by all Communists. Repression forced many Communists to leave the party. All this impaired the CPG's influence.²

In this complicated situation, faced with the united front of the reactionary forces and the Social-Democratic Party of Germany, the CPG made serious tactical mistakes. Among them was the goal of "overthrowing the Adenauer government" formulated in the Programme for National Reunification. Later, at its 23rd plenary session held in March 1956, the CPG leadership denounced this goal because it was not consonant with "the situation and conditions prevailing in West Germany, complicated the problem of establishing a united front of the working class and hampered the effort to rally the progressive forces and all those who thought in terms of the nation".³ Moreover, the Programme gave a wrong assessment to the positions taken by the Social Democrats and the trade unions.⁴

The provisions of the Programme were used as a convenient pre-

¹ V. D. Yezhov, *Class Battles on the Rhine. The Working-Class Movement in West Germany (1945-1973)*, Moscow, 1973, p. 136 (in Russian).

² *The Communist Party of Germany. 1945-1965. Brief Historical Survey, Documents, and a Chronicle of Events*, Moscow, 1968, pp. 49-50, 68-69, 75-79, 108-109 (in Russian).

³ *Dokumente der Kommunistischen Partei Deutschlands 1945-1956*, Berlin, 1956, p. 549.

⁴ V. D. Yezhov, op. cit., pp. 175-176.

text for launching a hysterical campaign against the CPG. In November 1952, the FRG government filed a petition with the Federal Constitutional Court in which it requested to proclaim the CPG a party whose activity "ran counter" to the Constitution. In the autumn of 1954, legal proceedings against the CPG were started in Karlsruhe. In August 1956, it was proclaimed anti-constitutional. The Communists were outlawed. The prohibition of the Communist Party was a natural outcome of the policy pursued by the FRG ruling circles. In 1955, they dragged the country into the North Atlantic bloc and turned it into a seat of potential aggression in Europe. The CPG went underground, regrouped its forces and launched a selfless struggle to uphold the revolutionary traditions of the West German working class.

The policy of anti-communism, repression, the ban imposed on the CPG and the consequent drop in its influence weakened the working people's positions and conduced to the activation of the militarist and revanchist forces. Nonetheless, most of the working class never fell under the control of the right-wing and conservative parties. Only a minority of workers voted for the ruling bloc of the bourgeois parties CDU/CSU. The majority of the working class supported the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SDPG), which remained the country's largest party. Its leaders, representing the reformist trend in the working-class movement, were still in no position to ignore the class interests of the hired workers who constituted the most important contingent of the party's mass base. For the class-conscious West German workers deemed it important that the SDPG proclaimed allegiance to the idea of socialism in its documents. The SDPG Programme adopted in 1954, stated that the party's goal was "to restructure society in the spirit of socialism as only socialism could create conditions for an unimpeded development of every person's abilities".¹

However, the reformist party's loyalty to socialist ideals was a mere declaration. Having refused to recognise the socialist system established in the "Soviet zone", the right wing of the SDPG leadership, headed by K. Schumacher and E. Ollenhauer, became actively involved in the cold war against the Soviet Union and the countries of people's democracy. By demanding to "liberate" the GDR, by refusing to recognise Germany's boundaries as established by the Potsdam Agreements and by participating in the anti-communist campaign, the SDPG leaders helped to foster revanchism and reaction in the country.

At the same time, the Social Democrats took their own, albeit

¹ *Dokumente zur parteipolitischen Entwicklung in Deutschland seit 1945*, Dritter Band, Zweiter Teil, Berlin, 1963, p. 94.

inconsistent, political stand on a number of major issues and thus dissociated themselves, to an extent, from the policy pursued by the CDU/CSU. Mindful of the experience of the Weimar Republic and the nazi dictatorship, the SDPG was apprehensive of an excessive rightward shift in the policy pursued by the ruling circles. The Social Democrats criticised the Adenauer government's anti-democratic steps and denounced its patronage of the extreme right-wing, pro-nazi organisations. They urged to ban the latter and to strengthen parliamentary and bourgeois-democratic institutions. The Social Democrats believed the idea of "liberating" the GDR by military means to be illusory and came out against the FRG's remilitarisation and its participation in the NATO. The SDPG warned against the strengthening of the monopolies and financial oligarchy in West Germany, favoured an improvement of working conditions and social security and a broader workers' participation in the management of enterprises. Under the conditions prevailing in the 50s, even this political line could be helpful in rebuffing the onslaught of reaction. However, the SDPG leaders' militant anti-communism, reformist inconsistency and weakness, controversial behaviour and fear of reliance on the mass movement more often than not brought to naught the importance of their anti-monopoly and militarist declarations.

The SDPG's socio-economic policies featured the same tendency towards mere declaration, narrow parliamentary approaches and repudiation of the unity of action. Those trends and groups within the party which demanded a decisive struggle against the monopolies and for socialism were in the minority. The SDPG sought to play the role of a "third force" rejecting both capitalism and communism. In practice, however, their efforts boiled down to state-monopoly regulation of the economy. Admittedly, unlike the CDU/CSU, the SDPG accepted a more consistent, "democratic" variant of state-monopoly regulation, the one that envisaged certain social reforms. For instance, the SDPG deemed it necessary to nationalise the extractive industry, ensure workers' participation in management, give aid to small and medium-sized enterprises, freeze rent, increase pensions, develop health services, labour protection, etc.

Within the framework of the policy actually implemented by the SDPG, the working class was in a position to struggle only for some of its demands, without going beyond the limits established by the existing system. At the same time, the SDPG's socio-economic doctrines allowed for the ruling class' social manoeuvring. In the mid-50s the party's leadership was increasingly dominated by the group which rejected even the "radical" phraseology that called for casting off "the Marxist ballast" and turning Social Democracy from a workers' into a "popular party".

The reformist trend also prevailed in the West German trade unions, especially after the 1952 purge, when the Communists were removed from all, even the least important, posts in trade unions. Yet, by virtue of their obligation to defend the immediate interests of the working people, the trade unions' ties with the working class were stronger than those of Social Democracy. Not infrequently they were more resolute in their pronouncements and actions than the SDPG. The early post-war years, when efforts to combat starvation and control speculation were put high on the agenda, saw the most dramatic upsurge in the economic struggle of the West German working people. The strikes and demonstrations held in the early months of 1948 involved nearly 2,500,000 workers. The general strike called in the autumn of 1948 involved 9,250,000 participants.¹ When economic disruption was remedied and the country enjoyed a rise in production, economic struggles subsided. This reflected the weakness of the West German labour movement which for a long time was content with predominantly material gains that resulted from the economic boom.

The West German united trade union centre, known as the Association of German Trade Unions (AGTU) and strongly influenced by the Social Democrats, was set up in 1949. Between 1949 and 1954, its membership grew from 4,800,000 to 6,100,000. The AGTU Munich Programme and the more detailed Principles of Economic Transformation formulated "collectivist" demands, such as trade unions' equal participation in the economic management on all levels (up to the federal level); nationalisation of major industries; and provision to the working people of a "just" share of the national wealth. Even a partial implementation of the goals formulated by the AGTU called for determined and strenuous class struggle with reliance on large-scale mass action.

The right-wing AGTU leaders made every effort to avoid strikes and called for "class collaboration" with the employers. Nonetheless, the years of 1954 and 1955 saw large-scale strikes and demonstrations held to demand an improvement in the workers' living standards. The general strike called by the Ruhr miners and metal workers involved 800,000 participants.

The AGTU leaders declared that trade unions would not be involved in political struggles. They avoided making any statements or taking any action on major political issues, such as the division of Germany or the elaboration of the West German Constitution. In the early 50s, the contradiction between the bold pronouncements and criticisms of the existing system and the day-to-day opportunist

¹ V. P. Iyerusalimsky, *The Years of Struggle and Maturing*, p. 228.

practices was the AGTU's main highlight. For all that, trade unions still had a certain political role to play as they urged, via the SDPG, workers' involvement in production management, economic planning, etc. In 1951, on the AGTU initiative, a law was adopted to ensure the participation of workers' representatives in the watch committees established by the companies in the mining and metallurgical industries. In point of fact, this kind of "co-management" signalled legal recognition of the rights gained by the working class in 1946-1947. Under this law, 50 per cent of all seats in watch committees and one of the three managerial posts in joint-stock companies employing more than 1,000 workers were to be granted to enterprises' and trade unions' delegates. The law was among the major post-war gains of the West German working class. The working masses and the trade unions regarded the 1951 law as a first step towards the democratisation of the economy, one that established a model of "co-management" at all major enterprises in all industries, regardless of their legal status and form of ownership.

However, the bill providing for "co-management" of the rest of industrial enterprises, drawn up by the government in 1952, departed from the principle of representation parity in the watch committees. Under the bill, the workers were to have only one-third of the seats. Moreover, it restricted the rights of production councils, prescribed trade unions' "responsible co-operation" with the employers "in the name of common wealth" and banned political activity at enterprises. The bill did not fail to arouse the workers' indignation. In May 1952, rallies and short-term strikes of protest against the bill were held in many towns and involved 2,500,000 workers. Although the AGTU leaders denounced the bill, they feared the grass-roots movement and did not wish to rely on it. As a result, the May 1952 workers' action did not amount to anything more than a formal demonstration of the AGTU organisational strength. The endorsement of the bill by the Bundestag signalled a setback for the West German working-class movement.

Thus, in the complicated conditions prevailing in the post-war years, due to the opportunists' sway in the working-class movement, the West German workers failed to offer a realistic alternative to the monopolies' and reaction's onslaught. In the mid-50s, the West German working class was on the defensive.

The reformists' domination was also featured by the labour movement in *Great Britain*. Admittedly, it did not face the same amount of difficulties as were plaguing the West German working people. Unlike the FRG, Britain was not in the forward edge of the cold war battle area. Therefore, the extreme reactionaries' influence on the British policy and ideology was far weaker. The

working class was in a position to benefit from the Labourites' victory in the 1945 election.

However, by the late 40s the situation in Britain had changed, but not in favour of the working class. Having effected a number of major reforms (which did not, however, undermine the positions of the British monopoly capital), the Labour government concluded that its main domestic-policy tasks had been fulfilled. To quote from R. H. S. Crossman, one of the Labour Party leaders, "the nationalisation of half a dozen major industries, the construction of an all-in system of social security and a free health service, and the tentative application of planning to the national economy—the achievement of these reforms seemed to have exhausted the content of British socialism. . . . The Labour Party was unsure where it was going."¹ The right-wing leaders of the Labour Party who played the dominant role in the government and the parliamentary faction were unwilling to go on with radical social reforms demanded by the left-wing Labourites.

The fragmentation and organisational weakness of the left wing prevented it from playing an important role in the party, especially as the cold war had already broken out. Meanwhile, for all its promises to pursue a "socialist" foreign policy, the Labour government aligned with the initiators of setting up the North Atlantic bloc, dividing Germany and rearming the FRG.

Equally contradictory was the Labourite policy as regards the colonies. Having granted independence under the pressure of the oppressed peoples' movements to India, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon, having withdrawn British troops from Indochina and Indonesia and having cut off military aid to Chiang Kaishek, the Labour government took measures to consolidate the economic positions of the British monopolies abroad, especially within the boundaries of the former empire reorganised into the Commonwealth of Nations. While granting independence to a number of its colonies in Asia, the Labour government threw the British troops against the national liberation movements in Malaya, Nigeria, the Gold Coast, Kenya, Nyasaland and Guyana.

In their turn, the cold war and the growth in the military spending had an impact on the Labour government's domestic policies. The arms race and the need to finance reforms led to a growth of the taxes and, subsequently, to a freeze in social spending. The primary aim of the government's call for saving and of the efforts to overcome the chronic balance-of-trade deficit was to moderate the working-class demands. The limitations imposed on imports (which resulted in a price rise), the efforts to restrain the working

¹ R. H. S. Crossman, *New Fabian Essays*, London, 1953, p. 1.

people's consumption and the wage freeze in 1948-1950 signalled the infringement of the factory and office workers' interests.

The contradictory nature of the results achieved by the Labour government—a considerable growth in the size of nationalised property and improvements in the social services, on the one hand, and reconstruction and modernisation of the weaker industries at the expense of the working people, as well as the austere economy system and inordinate military commitments, on the other, accounted for the Labourites' waning popularity among the workers in the late 40s and early 50s. In the context of the growing dissatisfaction with the outcome of the Labour government activity, unofficial, spontaneous strikes, whose organisers bypassed the right trade union leaders bent on checking the workers' struggles, were called more and more often. In 1948, the Labour authorities used the troops to suppress the "wild" strike of London dockers. In 1950-1951, some of the unofficial strike organisers were brought to trial.

Following the example of the Tories, the Labour Party leaders got involved in the anti-communist campaign and urged to fire Communists working at government offices and occupying top trade union positions. Some of the left-wing Labourites were expelled from the party on the grounds of their co-operation with Communists. The 1950 declaration "Labour and New Society" laid emphasis on moral issues rather than on outstanding socio-economic and political problems.

Thus, towards the end of their unprecedentedly long term in office (1945-1951), the Labour government found itself in an impasse. The programme of social reforms had almost been completed. As for further steps, the ones which could undermine the might and power of monopolies and radically improve the working people's living standard, the right-wing Labour leaders proved impotent to take them. In the cold war context, the government's and the Labour Party's policy was increasingly spearheaded at the left-wingers and the Communists, while their foreign policy increasingly featured anti-Sovietism and Atlantic orientation. The Labourites' policy caused the growing indignation of the masses. As a result, the ruling party suffered a defeat at the parliamentary election in the autumn of 1951. Although the number of votes cast for the Labourites was slightly greater than the number of votes given for the Tories, the victory gained by the latter in most constituencies secured for them a majority of seats in Parliament. That ushered in a 13-year-long period of the Tory rule, i.e. the rule of those who promoted and defended the interests of the bourgeoisie.

Unlike the Labour government, the Tories aimed their policy at encouraging and strengthening private enterprise. Vehement opponents of nationalisation, the Tories returned, in 1953, the metallur-

gical plants reconstructed at the public expense, to their former owners. That measure extended partial denationalisation. Rent control was abolished and municipal housing construction curtailed. Playing up the economic boom that started in 1952, the Tories made themselves out guarantors of the country's "welfare". However, the growth in direct taxes and prices, as well as the anti-labour orientation of the policy pursued by the Tories who strongly condemned the strikers for being "mercenary" and "selfish" gradually led to the activation of the working people's struggle.

At first, the strike movement was predominantly local by nature. Strikes were called at individual enterprises and never engulfed whole industries or industrial centres. The outmoded and complicated shop structure of trade unions often prevented the strikers from gaining victory. The fact that the workers employed at one enterprise belonged to many different trade unions complicated the preparations for and guidance of strikes. Nonetheless, the strike movement in the period under discussion was broader than in the pre-war years. Whereas in 1934-1938, the average annual number of strikers amounted to 318,000, in 1949-1953 the figure rose to 518,000. In 1953, mass strikes sweeping whole industries were resumed. Among the largest in a series was the strike of machine- and ship-building workers called on December 2, 1953. Work was stopped entirely or partially at 4,200 factories and dockyards. The 5,154 strikes called in 1953-1955 involved nearly 2,500,000 workers.¹ The Tories' anti-labour policy met with the growing resistance from the trade union vanguard.

At the same time, anti-communist propaganda and the dismissal of workers' militant leaders from top trade union posts divided and weakened the left-wing forces and hampered the activation of the proletariat. In the complicated context of the cold war and of the anti-communist orgy which had an impact on the reformist wing prevailing in the labour movement, the Communist Party of Great Britain lost two parliamentary seats it gained in 1945, and its influence on the masses grew weaker. However, it retained important positions among the shop-stewards who organised most of the strikes. To a certain extent, the Communists retained their ties with some of the left-wing Labourites. Together with the independents and some left-wing Labourites, the Communists organised the peace movement. The British Peace Committee collected 1,400,000 signatures under the Stockholm Appeal.²

The bourgeoisie failed to strangle the revolutionary trend in the

¹ V. V. Peschansky, *The Present-Day Labour Movement in Britain*, Moscow, 1963, p. 127 (in Russian).

² V. G. Trukhanovsky, *Britain's Recent History*, Moscow, 1958, p. 533 (in Russian).

labour movement. In 1951, proceeding from a profound analysis of the experience of the British and international working-class struggle, the Communist Party of Great Britain advanced its new programme known as *The British Road to Socialism*. The Programme formulated a thesis concerning the possibility and necessity of using Parliament for the purpose of a relatively peaceful advancement towards socialism. The Programme read: "The people of Britain can transform capitalist democracy into a real People's Democracy by transforming Parliament, the product of Britain's historic struggle for democracy, into the democratic instrument of the will of the vast majority of her people."¹

The British Communists also emphasised that radical political, economic and social transformations in the country can only be effected through a broad alliance of people from all walks of life—the organised working class, the brain and manual workers, self-employed workers, engineering personnel, urban middle classes, and farmers. According to the Programme, the organised working class which had the greatest stake in the struggle for a new society was to constitute the decisive and leading force of this alliance.

A situation similar to the one that prevailed in the late 40s and the early 50s in Britain and was marked by the strengthening of the tendency towards compromise and by the consolidation of opportunist trends in the labour movement, was observed in the *Scandinavian countries*. Pleading the economic difficulties (inflation and stagnant production), the Social Democrats suspended the implementation of limited social reforms. The only important step taken in the domestic area was the adoption of a new Constitution in Denmark (1953). Under the Constitution, one-chamber Parliament was instituted, the age qualification for the voters was lowered from 25 to 23 years, the Faeroe Islands were granted autonomy, and Greenland's colonial status was abolished. Repudiating any co-operation with the Communists and taking a strongly anti-communist stand, the Social Democrats in the Scandinavian countries opted for a bloc with smaller petty-bourgeois parties (with the Radicals in Denmark and with the Farmers' Union in Sweden). Denmark and Norway joined the NATO which since then has been the buttress of "Atlantic" policy in Scandinavia. It was only in Norway that the Social Democrats united in the Norwegian Workers' Party formed a one-party government. The growing split in the working-class movement was detrimental to the Communist parties which suffered tangible losses at parliamentary elections. The situation was further compounded by the spread of the revisionist and dogmatic attitudes in the Communist Party of Denmark and by the controversy among

¹ *The British Road to Socialism*, London, 1952, p. 12.

its leaders.¹ Yet, in this difficult situation, the Communists managed to retain strong positions in the trade union movement and played an active role in the peace movement which had grown into an important force in Scandinavia. The first half of the 50s was marked by a certain activation in the strike movement in all Scandinavian countries.

In *Austria*, the early post-war years saw a certain equilibrium between the Socialist Party of Austria (SPA) and the conservative bourgeois Austrian People's Party (APP). In defiance of the protests from the left-wingers among the SPA leaders, the party embarked on the road of "social partnership". As a result of this policy, the nationalised sector of the economy which accounted for more than 30 per cent of industrial production gradually turned into the leading component of the state-monopoly machinery. Despite the obvious prevalence of the right wing in the APP in the late 40s, the Socialists continued to co-operate with that party. In 1949, a group of left-wingers headed by E. Scharf left the SPA; in 1956, they united with the Communist Party. The autumn of 1950 saw a series of strikes called in token of protest against the trade union leaders' agreement with the government under which the increase in wages did not make up for the growth in prices. Bereft of the Socialists' support, the strikers were defeated. This major setback ushered in a long period of decline in the strike movement. The trade union association practically refused to regard the strikes as the working class' weapon in the struggle against the employers.

Despite the reactionaries' efforts—supported by the SPA leaders—to isolate the Communists, the latter went on with their resolute struggle to defend the working people's interests, to secure a settlement with the powers which had participated in the war against nazi Germany and to withdraw the occupation troops from Austria. As early as 1953 the Communist Party brought up the question of proclaiming Austria's neutrality. The signing of the State Treaty on the Reconstitution of Independent and Democratic Austria by the representatives of the USSR, the USA, Great Britain, France and Austria in May 1955, and the adoption, in October 1955, of the law on the country's neutrality by the Austrian parliament were among the first signs of the relaxation of international tensions in the 50s. They testified to the correctness of the CPA's principled policy.

In *Belgium and the Netherlands*, the Social Democratic parties were not so influential as their counterparts in Austria or the Scandinavian countries. Confessional parties (such as the Belgian Social Christian Party and the Dutch Catholic People's Party) and the

¹ *World Marxist Review*, No. 3, Vol. 2, 1959, pp. 53-57.

Liberals had relatively strong positions in the working-class movement. Periods marked by a bitter struggle between the bourgeois and the social-reformist parties alternated with periods marked by their co-operation. The co-operation was only natural in the context of the cold war anti-communist policies pursued by Social Democratic parties in that period. The anti-communist campaign launched by reaction culminated in the assassination of Julien Lahaut, Chairman of the Belgian Communist Party, in 1950. Yet, the traditions of anti-fascist struggle were still alive among the broad popular masses. They made themselves felt when the question of restoring the collaborationist King Leopold III to the throne was raised. On June 22, 1950 Belgium was swept by a general protest strike which involved nearly 500,000 people. Stormy demonstrations were held in all major towns. Leopold III was forced to delegate his authority to his son Baudouin, who became king on his coming of age in 1951.

A very special situation obtained in *Finland*. Here, up to July 1948, the Democratic Union of the People of Finland (DUPF) of which the Communist Party was the main force, had participated in the government. By unleashing a vigorous slander campaign against the DUPF, which was charged with preparing a coup d'etat, the reactionaries managed to have its representatives expelled from the government. This was followed by the coming to power of the Fagerholm government which tried to reorient the country's foreign policy towards worsening its relations with the USSR and achieving a rapprochement with the West. These attempts failed. The new government, headed by Urho Kaleva Kekkonen (at that time leader of the Agrarian Union), normalised, with the DUPF's assistance, Soviet-Finnish relations. In 1956, Kekkonen was elected President.

The worsening of relations between the Communists and the Social Democrats told on the situation in the trade union movement. In the context of growing inflation, the reformist leaders of the Central Trade Union Association of Finland (CTUAF) checked the struggle for higher wages and even concluded an agreement on an "economic truce" with the employers' union. The trade unions unwilling to comply with the agreement were expelled from the CTUAF. However, it was increasingly difficult to prevent the workers' from advancing ever new demands. In March 1956, the working people's discontent culminated in a prolonged general strike during which, for the first time in many years, co-operation between Communists and Social Democrats was established.

Finland, where the Communists' and the Social Democrats' forces within the working-class movement were roughly equal, took an intermediate position between other small West European countries

where the reformists dominated the labour movement, and the larger countries, above all France and Italy, where the correlation of forces was more expressly in favour of the revolutionary trend.

THE PECULIARITIES OF THE LABOUR MOVEMENT IN THE LATE 40s AND THE FIRST HALF OF THE 50s

In the late 40s and the first half of the 50s, the working class and especially its vanguard—the Communist parties—offered a strong resistance to the counter-attacks launched by imperialist reaction in almost all developed capitalist countries. In some areas—working people did not confine themselves to defence. They assumed the offensive and scored certain successes.

In this period, the labour movement in capitalist countries was developing along two principal lines. The struggle to improve the proletariat's living standards continued. In some countries it even acquired a broader scale. At the same time, many of the workers, together with the progressive intellectuals and representatives of other non-proletarian groups, were engaged in the open and bitter political struggle against reaction. They came out against the imperialists' efforts to prepare for and unleash another world war. The vanguard of the international working class was the main force in the campaign to preserve peace, curb the arms race and avert the threat of a thermonuclear world war. The degree of the workers' participation in the political struggle differed from country to country, ranging from the involvement of a rather small workers' vanguard in the United States to the large-scale involvement of Italian and French workers. Similarly different was the combination of economic and political struggles. On the whole, with the exception of several large-scale economic campaigns (a string of strikes that followed the expulsion of Communists from the governments, the struggle to implement the Labour Plan in Italy, the 1953 strike in France, etc.), this period was not highlighted by the combination of economic and political struggles. There was a wide gap between the conscious political struggle waged by the proletariat's vanguard and the day-to-day economic struggle involving most of the working masses who seldom joined the struggle for major long-term goals. This gap could be accounted for by the profound ideological split in the working class and by the dominant positions occupied by social reformism in the working-class movement in some countries.

For all that, the political struggle waged by the working class was tremendously important. It proved that the reactionary counter-offensive could never suppress its militancy, do away with its political independence, deal it a crushing blow and establish unlimited monopoly rule in developed capitalist countries.

The variety and the essence of political demands advanced by the front-rank workers, who never ceased their struggle against the right-wing forces and instantaneously reacted to any manoeuvre undertaken by the enemy, testified to their high political awareness. They demanded, among other things, to abide not in word, but in deed, by democratic constitutions and laws adopted by the parliaments of their countries in the early post-war years (for instance, they urged consistent democratisation and denazification of West Germany and demilitarisation of Japan). They resolutely protested against reactionary encroachments on democratic freedoms, on the working people's franchise and representation in parliaments (in France, Italy, the FRG), against anti-labour legislation (especially in the USA, the FRG and Japan), and against the infringement of the rights of trade unions and workers' committees. They never ceased to campaign for the extension of their rights and implementation of socio-economic reforms (for agrarian reforms in Italy and Japan, for the nationalisation of industry in Britain, Japan and other countries).

The late 40s and the first half of the 50s were highlighted by the progressive workers' political activity which took a characteristic form of demands to stop the arms race and war preparations, repudiate nuclear arms and ban their production, put an end to the cold war and normalise relations with the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. These demands, as well as protests against the creation and maintenance of the NATO and other aggressive blocs were intertwined with protests against the armed intervention in Korea and other countries and against aggression in general, with demands to democratise foreign policy and with actions of solidarity with the peoples' liberation struggles in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Progressive workers also came out against the presence of foreign troops and deployment of military bases, against the subjugation of the ruling circles in European capitalist countries and Japan to the influence of US imperialism, against US interference in the affairs of these countries, especially against the Marshall Plan. They demanded full independence and national sovereignty.

In the late 40s and the first half of the 50s, millions of progressive working people participated in rallies and demonstrations. They also resorted to such dramatic forms of struggle as stopping trains loaded with military cargo and blockading government offices. The forms of struggle became more varied and vehement than before and had a great impact on class struggles, especially in France, Italy and Japan.

In many countries, elections to central and local representative bodies, as well as these bodies themselves were used for the pur-

poses of advancing alternatives to the policies pursued by the ruling circles and for mustering and mobilising opposition forces. This form of political activity became widespread in countries with a parliamentary system and a high level of organisation of the working people, such as France and Italy.

Filing petitions was another widespread form of action. Campaigns to collect signatures under appeals for peace, for banning atomic weapons, stopping imperialist aggression in Korea or Vietnam and other similar appeals were another means of mobilising progressive forces. In developed capitalist countries such campaigns involved tens of millions of people.

As the working class and especially its vanguard formed the core of mass movements in many countries, right-wing attempts to isolate it failed. Mass movements expressed the interests of the working class and other progressive forces and had a general democratic platform. They played a historic role by checking the reactionary circles in the imperialist countries and forcing them to make concessions. However, the heroic struggle of the advanced workers against the policy of imperialism was not always closely linked to the day-to-day struggle waged by the broad masses with the object of securing immediate improvement in their living conditions. At times it assumed a somewhat declarative form and was confined to general protests and declarations of general principles. Nonetheless, despite the gap between the economic and political struggles they both served to check the onslaught launched by the ruling class.

In the years under discussion, the struggle to urge improvements in the living standards of the working people was marked by a great variety of forms and a vast scale. Special emphasis was laid on the demands for higher wages. The purpose was not only to secure a wage rise but also to establish a guaranteed minimum wage and provide for the automatic adjustment of wages to the growth in prices. Workers demanded improvement in the labour protection and social security systems, longer leaves, elimination of unemployment, and guaranteed full employment. They demanded skill-improvement opportunities and protested against the intensification of labour and dismissals due to modernisation and automation of production. Great emphasis was laid on the conclusion, observance and regular revision of collective agreements and extending the practice of concluding them from individual enterprises to companies and whole industries. In many countries, for instance, in the United States, Canada, Japan and Italy, collective bargaining was the main direction of the workers' struggle for better living standards and broader rights at their places of work.

Many strikes resulted from conflicts between the trade unions

and employers because of their different interpretation of the collective agreement provisions. The close link between the strikes and the conclusion of collective agreements disproved the bourgeois sociologists' thesis about the mechanism of collective bargaining serving as a stabiliser of class relations between labour and capital. Wage-rate agreements became the object of constant struggle between labour and capital. The growth in the number of demands advanced by the strikers was chiefly mirrored by the growth in the number of articles covering the employees' wages, working conditions and status at the place of work, which were included in collective agreements. Once a victory was scored and reflected in a collective agreement, it served as a bridgehead for the next round of struggle for new demands.

At the same time, a great number of workers' demands went beyond the limits of collective agreements. Among them were demands to stop discrimination according to sex, race and nationality or the demands to promote the interests of other groups of working people—office workers, peasants, intellectuals. The importance attached to them and their correlation were different in each country. They were supplemented by specific demands generated by the specific conditions obtaining in a given country. All of them could cause and, in many instances, did cause bitter struggle in which strikes occupied an important place.

In the period under consideration, the first tide of strikes swept most of the developed capitalist countries in the late 40s. The second tide surged in 1951-1953 or, in some countries, in 1953-1955. Between 1947 and 1956, the number of strikers in the six largest capitalist countries ran to nearly 100,000,000, i.e. more than the number of people involved in strikes that took place in all developed capitalist countries during 21 years between 1919 and 1939. The number of man-days lost due to the strikes amounted to nearly 570,000,000. During the decade in question the strike movement attained the broadest scale in Italy and was the most stubborn in the United States where the strikes caused a loss of 352,000,000 man-days. The first three years—1947, 1948 and 1949—saw major strikes which involved nearly 50 per cent of all people (more than 45,000,000) who went on strike in the largest capitalist countries in the decade in question.

In 1947-1949, as well as in the first half of the 50s, general strikes were a frequent occurrence. The degree of the working masses' involvement in strikes differed from country to country. In 1948-1956, the percentage of workers involved in strikes was relatively high in Italy, France, Australia, Japan and Finland. It was rather low in the Scandinavian countries, the FRG, and the Netherlands. The United States, Canada and Britain occupied an inter-

mediary position between the two groups of countries. On the whole, the percentage of workers involved in strikes in 1948-1956 grew in almost all major capitalist countries.

In terms of intensity, scale and duration of strikes, the United States, Italy, France, Finland, Australia, Japan and Canada came first. The strikers were the most tenacious and stubborn in Sweden, Canada, Finland and the United States.

An increasing emphasis was laid on granting careful and judicious leadership to the strikes. A correct analysis of the situation often enabled the trade unions to succeed in wrenching concessions by calling, or threatening to call, a short-term strike. As the economic situation worsened, the employers' resistance to the workers' demands grew and strikes became longer. With the help of right-wing reformist trade union leaders, the capitalist state elaborated and implemented a legislative and contractual procedure for delaying, hampering and disrupting strikes. The institution of the so-called "cooling-down periods" (from one week- to several months-long ones), during which strikes were temporarily prohibited, enabled the employers and the authorities to prepare for them. Among the means of intimidating the trade unions was the imposition of fines on disobedient unions and throwing strike leaders into prison. The bourgeois state's onslaught against trade union rights was carried out not only along the lines of "consolidating law and order". To establish "order" at enterprises where strikes were called extraordinary measures were applied, up to calling in troops and resorting to arms.

However, in most cases the monopolists used more sophisticated means. By making partial concessions and by manoeuvring, they set different groups of strikers against one another and drove a wedge in the trade union ranks. Internal controversy in the trade union movement, too, once it arose, seriously undermined the strikers' position and, at times, brought about their defeat. Organisational difficulties experienced by trade unions and shopwise fragmentation in such countries as Britain and the United States also had a negative effect on the strikes.

The working class noticeably varied the tactics and the forms of strikes. Widely practiced were so-called preventive strikes aimed at demonstrating a high level of the workers' organisation and their preparedness to fight for their interests. In Japan, they had a specific stage-by-stage pattern. At the first stage, work was stopped for 24 hours; if the employers refused to make concessions, work was stopped for 48 hours and then, for another 48 hours. After that, the duration of the strike was not specified and it could last for an indefinite period. In the phase of the economic boom, workers, especially skilled ones, often refused to work overtime and thus exert-

ed pressure on the employers. This method of struggle proved to be effective.

When for financial or juridical reasons it was impossible to call a normal, open strike, trade unions called on the workers to slow down work. This form of strike was broadly used in Japan. Transport and communication workers in many capitalist countries widely used a similar type of strike known as "work according to rules". Shop assistants or other workers employed in the sphere of services often resorted to "diligence strikes", when they provided better services to clients at the cost of the employer.

Trade unions also employed such methods of putting pressure to bear on the employers as calling meetings and rallies during working hours, the workers' simultaneous going on holiday and other similar forms of struggle which did not run counter to labour legislation. Such actions interrupted the production process or stopped it altogether without strike being officially called.

The tactics of "guerrilla strikes" was prompted by the understanding of the importance of sudden, unexpected blows dealt at the employers. Occurring unexpectedly at the key production points and with the use of limited forces they caused considerably smaller economic losses to the trade union membership as a whole. This was especially important in the case of those trade unions which had small strike funds or did not have them at all. Italian trade unions evolved a whole arsenal of various means they used during strikes. During "intermittent" strikes, for instance, work was stopped successively according to a specially devised schedule, in shops or enterprises closely linked to one another by a continuous production process. The life of the enterprise at which such a strike was called was fully or almost fully paralysed, although the bulk of the personnel was not officially taking part in the strike. A similar idea underlied staggered strikes, when work was stopped at every other production section. A variety of the staggered strikes was the odd and even strike, when two groups of workers at the same enterprise went on strike in turn every other day of the working week.

Thus, the participation of greater numbers of workers in strikes was ensured not only and not so much by increasing the number of complete stoppages and the number of people involved in them but by partial stoppage of production, slowing down the tempo of work and the like. It is natural that these cases were often overlooked by official statistics.

A relative decline in the campaign of strikes observed in the 50s in some countries gave a new lease of life to the old bourgeois and left-wing revisionist theories about the decline of the labour movement, its forfeiting the revolutionary spirit and becoming "bour-

geois". The groundlessness of this theory can be revealed, among other things, by indicating that the temporary decrease in the number of strikes and their participants was not, contrary to the allegations of the supporters of the above theory, a persistent and lasting tendency. Moreover, the workers' active participation in strikes has never been regarded by the Marxists as the sole or at least the principal indicator of the level of development of the class struggle. A considerable percentage of the workers' socio-economic gains was the outcome of the pressure exerted by the trade unions on the employers in the course of collective bargaining. This pressure did not necessarily culminate in strikes. Furthermore, many concessions were wrung as a result of the workers', above all Communist parties', activity in parliament, local government bodies and elsewhere.

As a rule, the weightiest results were achieved in urging improvements in the workers' living standards. This can be accounted for by many factors, above all, by the improvement of the economic situation in almost all countries and by the fact that the overwhelming majority of the working people, who suffered heavy material losses during the war, focused their attention and efforts on economic issues. This was also due to the tactics adopted by the trade unions in this period. They generally avoided tackling major socio-economic problems of national importance and found it easier to achieve the unity of action in the labour movement by rallying its different trends around the slogans of the struggle for better living conditions.

The workers' stubborn efforts were responsible for the rise in nominal wages in almost all developed capitalist countries. Between 1950 and 1954, average wages in the FRG grew by 34 per cent.¹ Between 1947 and 1952, the nominal wages in France increased by a factor of 2.7.² However, inflation seriously depreciated these gains. The take-home wages did not match the effort put in by the workers engaged in the struggle for higher wages. Between 1950 and 1955, real wages in manufacturing industries grew by 15 per cent in the United States, by 12.1 per cent in Britain, by 32.6 per cent in France, by 25.4 per cent in the FRG, by 3.9 per cent in Italy, and by 34.1 per cent in Japan.³

It should be borne in mind that the reference base was relatively low. In most countries it was slightly above the pre-war level, and in some countries it was even below the pre-war level. For instance,

¹ *The Position and Struggle of the Working Class in the West European Countries*, Moscow, 1957, p. 376 (in Russian).

² *Ibid.*, p. 43.

³ *Socio-Economic Problems Facing Working People in Capitalist Countries*, Moscow, 1974, pp. 156-157 (in Russian).

in 1950, the real wages in Japan were 85.4 per cent of the 1934-1936 wages; in France they amounted to 105 per cent of the 1938 level and only in the FRG they grew by 46 per cent as against the 1938 take-home wages in nazi Germany.¹

Everywhere wages grew slower than profits and interest rates. As a result, despite a certain rise in the take-home wages, the share of wages in the national income of the developed capitalist countries sometimes diminished. Whereas in 1948, wages accounted for 31.6 per cent of Italy's national income, in 1953 they accounted for only 30 per cent.²

Consequent to the long and bitter struggle waged by the working people in the late 40s and the first half of the 50s the working week was shortened. By the mid-50s, the average working week in West European countries was about 43 and in the United States 40 hours long. However, a considerable percentage of workers in these countries continued to toil from 45 to 48 hours a week.

Certain, sometimes quite appreciable, achievements were gained by the working class of different countries in the sphere of socio-economic reforms. As has already been mentioned above, in the FRG the workers' participation in the management of enterprises was ensured by legislation. An agrarian reform was effected in Italy. On the whole, however, successes scored in this area in the late 40s and the first half of the 50s were incomparable to those won by the working class in the early post-war years. The concessions wrenched by the working people in the period marked by the reactionary onslaught in the material and other spheres did not seriously affect, with a few exceptions, the interests of the monopoly capital and did not challenge its property rights and political power. They should be directly linked to the deepening split suffered by the working class in the years of the cold war, to the reactionary offensive and to the noticeable weakening of the political influence of the labour movement in developed capitalist countries. In this period, the Communist parties (in France, Italy and later in Britain this also concerned other workers' parties) were ousted from the governments; the workers' revolutionary vanguard was ostracised; persistent efforts towards its political isolation were made; there emerged certain trends within the working-class movement which questioned its political independence and gravitated, both subjectively and objectively, towards the "integration" of the working class in the state-monopoly system. The main negative outcome of the

¹ *Real Wages in the Period of the General Crisis of Capitalism*, Moscow, 1962, pp. 204, 277, 466 (in Russian).

² *The Economic Position of Capitalist Countries in 1954*, Moscow, 1955, p. 218 (in Russian).

period under consideration can be described as the weakening of the working class' political positions.

However, it is far more important that the ruling class did not succeed in obtaining such "integration" and breaking the resistance of the left-wing forces. When this complicated period in the working-class movement was over, the forces of democracy and socialism assumed the offensive, proceeding from the positions they had retained throughout the bitter struggle and relying on the invaluable experience accumulated during the years of trial.

GROWING IDEOLOGICAL AND ORGANISATIONAL DELIMITATION IN THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR MOVEMENT

The destabilisation of the unity of action of various national contingents of the working class established during the Second World War largely accounts for the weakening of the political positions of this class in the developed capitalist countries in the late 40s and the early 50s. The aggravation of the international tensions conducted to the abrupt worsening of relations between the revolutionary and the social-reformist trends within the labour movement.

This was largely due to the position taken by Social Democracy which, in the face of the notorious "Communist danger", gave less priority to criticising capitalism, advocating social programmes and defending specific interests of the working people. Under the slogan of defending democracy against "totalitarianism", the social-reformist politicians agreed to setting up anti-communist, pro-Atlantic and pro-American blocs with bourgeois parties. Opposed to real socialism, social democratic ideologists maintained that the post-war capitalist society was the "lesser evil". They portrayed the Communist parties as enemies of democracy, closing their eyes to the fact that Communists had made a decisive contribution to defending democracy in the West. Overestimating the importance of socio-political changes that occurred in capitalist countries after the war, many of the spiritual leaders of Social Democracy maintained that social reforms and greater state intervention had altered or even done away with the private capitalist nature of society and that further evolution of class collaboration would put an end to the division of society into classes.

In their programmes Social-Democratic parties mentioned socialist goals; some of them, for instance, the SFIO, used Marxist terminology. However, all this stood in an increasingly sharp contrast with their anti-communist practices. The opportunist policy vis-à-vis the monopoly capital did not prevent many Social Democrats from harbouring illusion about their role being that of a "third

force" independent both of capitalism and communism.¹ The illusion was bolstered by the Social Democratic parties' opposition to the attempts to revive fascism and by their support to parliamentary democracy and working people's immediate demands. However, by causing a split in the working class, Social Democracy strongly limited the opportunities for a successful struggle.

Just as before, there were various factions and groups within Social Democracy. As a matter of fact, they can be divided into three main trends: the right-wingers (Ernest Bevin, Giuseppe Saragat, Paul-Henri Spaak, Kurt Schumacher, Karl Renner and others) who played the leading role in international social democratic politics and persistently urged to "integrate" the labour movement in the state-monopoly system; the centrists (L. Blum, T. Katayama, R.H.S. Crossman and others) who sought to combine the advocacy of anti-communism and class collaboration with the defence of working people's interests; the left-wingers (Pietro Nenni, Lelio Basso, Erwin Scharf, Mosaburo Suzuki, Konni Zilliacus, and others) who tried to prevent the Social Democrats from breaking with the Communists and urged to go on with the joint struggle for democracy and social justice. The latter group generally found itself in the minority.

The International Socialist Consultative Committee, set up in 1947, and renamed later into the Committee of International Socialist Conferences (COMISCO), conducted to the consolidation of the right-wingers and the centrists and promoted the unification of the majority of Social Democratic parties on an anti-communist basis. The COMISCO fully supported the Atlantic foreign-policy course, which brought about the Marshall Plan, the NATO and the European Council and proclaimed the United States the bulwark of the "free world". The differences that emerged between Social Democratic parties on the tactical aspects of international politics did not prevent the COMISCO from waging a vigorous struggle against Communist parties and the peace movement.

The setting up of the Socialist International (SI), an international association of Social Democrats under right-wing leadership, dealt another blow at the international unity of the working-class movement. In the summer of 1951, a conference of 34 Social Democratic parties convened in Frankfurt on the Main decided to set up an international association of parties striving after the establishment of "democratic socialism".² The Aims and Tasks of Democratic So-

¹ To quote from R. H. S. Crossman, "what the Western socialist needs today is ... a critical attitude to both ideologies..." (R. H. S. Crossman, *op. cit.*, p. 20).

² *Yearbook of the International Socialist Labour Movement. 1956-1957*, London, 1956, p. 38.

cialism adopted by the conference was the basic programmatic document of the Socialist International. Its authors condemned capitalism and stressed the need for replacing it by "democratic socialism". However, they condemned capitalism in general terms and called the working people to work to eliminate the consequences of capitalism, rather than the imperialist system as such.¹ Seeking to broaden the social base of their movement, the participants in the conference passed over in silence the history-making role and the basic interests of the working class. For the same purpose, they declared that Social Democrats' outlook might be based on Marxism, as well as other teachings, including religious ones. The authors of the Declaration rejected forcible revolution, condemned the dictatorship of the working class and equated it to fascism, proclaimed Communists "enemies of democracy" and described Soviet policy as "aggressive" and "imperialist".²

They claimed that socialism could only be achieved through "political and economic democracy" without a proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat. They claimed that those capitalist countries which had influential Social Democratic parties had already achieved major successes in building a new, socialist society. They denigrated real socialism achieved in the USSR and in other socialist countries and ignored its importance. While recognising the desirability of instituting public ownership of the means of production and the necessity of economic planning, the authors of the Declaration deemed it possible to retain, along with public ownership, private ownership of the means of production and stressed that social justice was to be achieved through economic democracy", i.e. through workers' participation in running capitalist enterprises.³

The Declaration called for social justice, a better life for the working people freedom and universal peace, proclaiming them the goals of Social Democracy. However, these goals were contrasted not so much with those of capitalism as with those of real socialism obtaining in the USSR and other socialist countries. Regarding the struggle against communism as its top-priority task, the Socialist International laid greater emphasis on it than on the struggle against capitalism.

The Conference defined the SI's organisational structure as a federation of fully independent parties. The SI bodies—congresses, the Council, the Executive Committee and the Bureau—were to promote

¹ Ibid., p. 39.

² *Yearbook of the International Socialist Labour Movement. 1956-1957*, p. 40.

³ Ibid., pp. 42-43.

the exchange of opinions among SI member organisations and to ensure the co-ordination of their activity. However, they were not to interfere in their affairs. The decisions adopted by SI congresses were not binding on the member parties. Arrived at through compromise among various Social Democratic parties and trends, these decisions were a kind of a resultant indicative of the general orientation of social democratic development.

More than thirty Social Democratic parties (mostly West European ones) associated in the Socialist International had a membership of 10,000,000 people. They won nearly 40,000,000 votes at the parliamentary elections held in the period under consideration.

The first to become Socialist International's Chairman and Secretary were Morgan Phillips and Julius Braunthal, respectively. Until the end of the 50s the Socialist International was dominated by the bloc of right-wingers and centrists, in which the former had a leading role to play. As for the left-wingers, their forces were dispersed and insignificant.

Among international organisations connected with the Socialist International were the International Council of Social Democratic Women, the International Union of Socialist Youth, the International Union of Social Democratic Teachers, the Latin American Secretariat and some others. In an effort to strengthen their positions, social-reformists relied on hundreds of newspapers and magazines.

While taking an active part in the cold war against the socialist community countries, the Socialist International was often more sober-minded in its stand than the aggressive circles in the imperialist countries. In 1953, the Third SI Congress came out in favour of negotiations between the Western powers and the USSR and urged to stop the war in Korea and conclude a peace treaty with Austria. The next SI Congress, held in 1955, spoke for creating a system of European security, universal disarmament and the settlement of outstanding problems, including the German issue, by negotiation. At the same time, it approved of the terms advanced by the imperialist powers and practically ruling out the possibility for a just settlement of international problems.

The Socialist International did not grant any real support to the national liberation movements. The representatives of the SI parties participating in the governments of imperialist states were often among the organisers of the armed struggle against the national liberation movements in many countries, among them Madagascar, Egypt, Malaya, Kenya, Laos, Cambodia, Algeria, Morocco, and Congo. Some Asian Social Democratic parties, which advocated the slogan of "democratic socialism" but, nonetheless, participated in the

struggle for national independence, had no trust in the Socialist International. Some of them refused to join it.

In the mid-50s, the crisis of the policy of direct confrontation with the socialist countries became obvious. There were also signs of the failure of the "third force" policy. The Socialist International's course towards anti-communism and its efforts to contain the working-class movement within the limits of the existing system did not win greater influence for the social-reformists, contrary to their expectation. There was an increase in the Social Democratic parties' membership and in the number of voters supporting them. However, the ranks of the working class were growing much faster.

The SI leaders were compelled to amend their policies. This complicated and contradictory process was accompanied by the strife among social democratic trends. The left-wing Social Democracy was becoming more vigorous, and there emerged differences between the right-wingers and the centrists. In this context, even the right-wingers were forced to recognise that there was a need to change the social democratic course. However, we shall not describe the alterations and adjustments in the Social Democratic policies here, as that process unfolded largely beyond the limits of the period under the consideration.

In the late 40s, the right-wing Social Democrats actively contributed to the efforts towards disrupting the unity of the international trade union movement. The split in the movement was motivated by the difference in the approach to the Marshall Plan. In March 1948, a conference of West European trade unions was held in London. The right-wing leaders of the TUC (Britain) and the CIO (USA), who held some important posts in the WFTU, succeeded in getting the conference's approval of the Marshall Plan and setting up a trade union consultative committee. The AUCCTU (USSR), the CGT of France, the CGIL of Italy and many other trade unions associated in the WFTU frustrated the right-wingers' attempts to get the WFTU Executive's and Bureau's approval for the Marshall Plan. In an effort to safeguard the unity of the world trade union movement and prevent its split over the Marshall Plan, the WFTU Executive Committee ruled that each trade union should be independent in working out its approach to the Marshall Plan.

In the autumn of 1948, the leaders of the TUC of Britain declared that the WFTU was "dominated by Soviet trade unions" and that it had turned into "a mouthpiece of Soviet foreign policy". They proposed—allegedly in the name of overcoming differences—to suspend the WFTU activity for a year. They hoped to use that time to knock together their own international union centre. The

AFL leaders, for their part, demanded to set up an international trade union centre opposed to the WFTU. In January 1949, having failed to push through a resolution on suspending the WFTU activity, the TUC, CIO and Dutch trade unions left the session of the WFTU Bureau. In June 1949, the right-wingers convened a conference of the trade unions supporting them in Geneva. The conference was attended by the representatives of 38 trade union centres from various countries, including the AFL and 12 international trade union secretariats. The preparatory committee drew up draft rules of an international trade union association expected to promote class collaboration with the bourgeoisie and work towards improving the working class' position within the framework of the capitalist system. The trade union conference convened to set up an International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and endorse its Rules was held in November-December 1949. It was attended by representatives of trade unions functioning in 59 countries and having a membership of 48,000,000. The ICFTU was formally established in the autumn of 1951.

The ICFTU leaders advanced the slogan "Bread, Freedom and Peace" (which certainly sounded attractive to the working people) and stated that their goal was to defend trade union rights, urge their broader participation in economic management, help the workers in less developed countries, support the United Nations, ensure workers' participation in all international organisations, on the one hand, and to struggle against the ideology and policy of the Communist parties, on the other hand. Understandably, such a programme could only disorient the workers.

The setting up of the ICFTU signalled a split in the international trade union movement and the weakening of the working-class' positions. The ICFTU leaders sought to participate in the cold war against the communist movement and the socialist world. In 1955, the ICFTU officially prohibited its members to maintain contacts with the WFTU members, especially with those in socialist countries. Although most of the organisations affiliated in the ICFTU gravitated towards social reformism, the leaders of US trade unions, who rejected "democratic socialism" and put up with its supporters only because they were hostile to communism, persistently worked to establish their hegemony over the ICFTU.

The split in the trade union movement was further aggravated by the fact that the Christian trade unions, which had stood aside from the WFTU and retained their international association known as the International Federation of Christian Trade Unions (IFCTU), also took an anti-communist stand. The existence of three international trade union centres divided and weakened the trade

union front in the face of the onslaught of the monopoly capital.

The situation resulting from the cold war, the growing split in the international labour movement and its individual national contingents, as well as the social-reformists' anti-communist policy greatly complicated the activity of the militant vanguard of the working class. In the context of anti-communist persecution, which was supported and, on many occasions, directly contributed to by Social Democratic leaders and functionaries, the Communist parties lost some of their positions. Whereas in 1946, the 23 Communist parties functioning in the developed capitalist countries had a membership of 3,700,000, in 1956 their membership dropped to 2,900,000. The reduction in the membership of the Communist parties in the 50s can be also accounted for by a new tide of anti-communism and by the revival of revisionism after the Twentieth CPSU Congress which exposed the Stalin personality cult and its consequences.

In the early post-war years, the communist movement advanced a number of important slogans, calling for a vigorous struggle for peace, describing it as a major task of the labour movement and proclaiming the working class the standard bearer of democracy. However, the Communists' selfless anti-war struggle was not infrequently combined with outmoded methods and conceptions. They sometimes failed to take into consideration specific national conditions and to timely modify the tactics of their struggle.

In the period under consideration, the Information Bureau of the Communist and Workers' Parties, set up at the end of September 1947 by the central committees of nine parties (from Bulgaria, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Romania, the Soviet Union, France, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia) with the object of organising exchanges of experience and co-ordinating the parties' activities on the basis of mutual consent, had a great role to play in co-ordinating the efforts of individual Communist parties. This signalled the creation of an international body different from the Communist International in that it was not a worldwide directive body, but rather a regional, consultative and co-ordinating organisation. The Informbureau was assailed by the anti-communists who portrayed the Cominform—that was the way they called the Informbureau—as “a secret, worldwide, omnipotent organisation”, “a weapon in the hands of the Kremlin”. In actual fact, the Informbureau was an organisation which set itself the goal of analysing the changed conditions and outlined new tasks for the working-class and communist movements.

These tasks were the centre of attention of the conferences held by the representatives of the Communist parties associated in the

Informbureau in September 1947 in Poland and in November 1949 in Hungary. The Declaration adopted at the 1947 Conference read: "Therefore, the Communist Parties must take the lead in resisting the plans of imperialist expansion and aggression in all spheres—state, political, economic and ideological; they must close their ranks, unite their efforts on the basis of a common anti-imperialist and democratic platform and rally around themselves all the democratic and patriotic forces of the nation."¹

The newspaper published by the Informbureau under the title *For a Lasting Peace, for a People's Democracy!* made a weighty contribution to strengthening the international communist movement. It summed up the parties' experience, discussed urgent problems facing them and covered general issues of the world communist movement.

The Informbureau was functioning under difficult conditions which prevailed in the 40s and the early 50s and were aggravated by the impact of the Stalin personality cult and by the violation of the Leninist norms of party life. This affected some of the assessments and conclusions it made. In 1948, for instance, the Informbureau adopted a statement concerning the Communist Party of Yugoslavia. That led to a prolonged isolation of the party from the international communist movement and did harm to the latter. The errors committed by the Informbureau were used by the right-wing and social-reformist forces in persecuting Communists in capitalist countries. However, these shortcomings did not cancel the Informbureau's vast contribution to the struggle waged by the Communists and other progressive forces against imperialism.

The contacts among the Communist parties in the second half of the 40s and in the first half of the 50s were not confined solely to the Informbureau. They were much broader and took the form of exchanges of information and delegations, as well as bilateral talks. International co-operation among the Communists was essential to their success in resisting and counteracting the onslaught of the right-wing forces and expanding a mass campaign against the aggressive imperialist policy.

The Communists' leading role in defending the interests of the working class and other strata of the working people was manifested, in particular, in their initiatives aimed at setting up, expanding and strengthening international democratic organisations which ensured contacts between the Communists and the broad masses and mobilised the latter to the struggle against imperialism.

¹ *For a Lasting Peace, for a People's Democracy*, November 10, 1947, p. 1.

In November 1945, on the initiative of the Communists and representatives of many democratic organisations, an International Women's Congress was convened in Paris. It proclaimed the foundation of the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF), which united progressive women's organisations of most countries. By the mid-50s, nearly 200,000,000 women from 70 countries had been associated in WIDF. The World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY) founded in 1947 was soon joined by the International Union of Students (numbering nearly 6,000,000 members). Of great importance for mobilising the younger generation to the struggle for peace and international friendship were the WEDY-sponsored international youth festivals, a series of which was held, since 1947, in Prague, Budapest, Berlin, and Bucharest, as well as the world youth week annually marked in March. By the mid-50s, the WFDY had united youth organisations from 106 countries. Their total membership amounted to 80,000,000.

The worldwide peace movement was the broadest of all democratic movements in the late 40s and early 50s. The movement's main goal was to prevent another world war. It attracted representatives of different organisations, people of various races and nationalities, religious beliefs and political views, all of whom recognised the need to offer a vigorous counteraction to the warmongers—the US imperialists and their accomplices. This mass campaign was largely a result of the Communists' initiative and had its roots in the working people's concern about the emergence of aggressive imperialist blocs, such as the NATO, which was knocked together in 1949. The first stage of the campaign (1948-1949) was highlighted by the appearance of national peace centres in France, Britain and other countries. The World Peace Congress of cultural workers, held in the summer of 1948 in Wrocław, gave a strong impetus to the peace movement. The Congress called for the international union of all peace champions. The appeals issued by the Congress were supported by the WFTU, by international democratic organisations and by many progressive public figures, scientists and artistes, among them John Bernal, Hewlett Johnson, Johannes Becher, Pietro Nenni, Emi Xiao, William Du Bois, Paul Robeson, Louis Aragon, Pablo Picasso, Louis Saillant, Eugénie Cotton, Ahmed Sékou Touré, Pablo Neruda, Ishiro Oyama, Jorge Amado.

In the spring of 1949, Paris became the seat of the first World Congress of Peace Supporters. In a bid to torpedo the Congress, the ruling circles in France and other capitalist countries prevented many delegates from coming to Paris. Those who failed to get to Paris, gathered in Prague. The two parts of the Congress—held in Paris and in Prague—showed great unanimity. The appeal they issued formulated the programme of the peace movement. It was sup-

ported by the delegates from 72 countries who represented 560 national and 12 international organisations. They condemned the arms race and the atomic weapons, and called on the peoples to watch vigilantly the warmongers' action and to work towards peaceful co-operation among all nations. The Congress elected a Permanent Committee. It was chaired by the eminent physicist Frédéric Joliot-Curie. The Committee mobilised the progressive forces to the campaign to stop imperialist aggression in Indochina, Indonesia, Malaya and the Philippines. It proclaimed October 2 International Day of Struggle for Peace. In 1949, this day was marked by progressive forces in 60 countries. They voiced their protest against the imperialists' aggressive policy. In the spring of 1950, a campaign to collect signatures under the Appeal to ban atomic weapons and proclaim their first use a war crime, issued by the Permanent Committee at its session in Stockholm, was launched in many countries the world over. Nearly 500,000,000 signatures were collected.¹

The second World Congress of Peace Supporters was held in the autumn of 1950 in Warsaw. It was attended by representatives of the progressive public from 80 countries. They denounced the criminal war unleashed by the imperialists against the Korean people and stressed the need to use all possible means to mobilise, strengthen and encourage the activity of peace supporters. The Congress demanded that the aggression in Korea be stopped, recognition be granted to the People's Republic of China, all criminal types of arms—atomic, bacteriological and chemical—banned and armaments reduced. The Permanent Committee was transformed into the World Peace Council. In the early 1951, it issued an Appeal for a Great Powers' Peace Pact. The Appeal was signed by 600,000,000 people. The World Peace Council studied the experience of peace campaigns and recommended peace champions to use various forms of struggle, such as rallies, public polls and picketing.

In order to involve more people in the struggle for peace, the World Peace Council held the Congress of Peace Supporters in Asia and the Pacific in the autumn of 1952; in December 1952, it convened the Vienna Congress of Peoples for Peace which was attended, apart from active fighters for peace, by pacifists and advocates of neutrality. The representatives of progressive forces from 85 countries unanimously demanded national independence and security to all peoples, insisted on the end of the war in Korea and Indochina and on making every effort towards easing international tensions. Mass campaigns were organised to support Soviet proposals

¹ S. I. Viskov, *The Peoples' Anti-War Coalition*, Moscow, 1954, p. 51 (in Russian).

on negotiations among the Great Powers, to put an end to the imperialist intervention in Korea and Indochina, to protest against the setting up of a "European Defence Community" and "European Army", to demand a ban on the production, testing and use of nuclear weapons. These campaigns involved nearly 700,000,000 participants. In 1955, Delhi became the seat of the Asian Conference for the relaxation of international tensions, while Helsinki offered a venue for the World Peace Assembly attended by delegates from 68 countries. These representative gatherings testified to the involvement of ever new countries and categories of people in the peace movement.

By the mid-50s, the movement of peace supporters had turned into the broadest mass democratic movement in the world; it involved progressive workers, peasants, intellectuals, people from the urban middle classes, and those representatives of the small and middle bourgeoisie and even of the big bourgeoisie who were aware of the danger of war and the benefits of peace. The Marxist-Leninist parties repudiated sectarian tendencies towards turning this broad democratic movement into a campaign for socialism because they realised that it would result in the weakening of the movement and in the shrinking of its social base. They made every effort to expand it by attracting ever broader strata of the population and to enhance the participants' activity in the struggle for stronger peace. It is on their initiative that concrete programmes of the peace movement were mapped out and improved, experience was summed up and most effective methods of struggle were recommended. The world peace movement developed into an important political factor that helped to check the activity of imperialist aggressors and, in some cases, forced them to retreat. Thanks to the movement, the energy of the progressive forces in developed capitalist and newly-free states was directed into the channel of common struggle against the danger of a new world war. It was also used to support the bulwark of peace—the USSR and other socialist countries, i.e. the world system of socialism. This laid the stage for frustrating the warmongers' plans, preserving peace and easing international tensions.

In the mid-50s, despite the cold war and the strong pressure from the imperialist forces, the countries of people's democracy, led by the working class, were successfully building the foundations of socialism. The world socialist system had expanded and grown stronger. This brought about a change in the balance of forces on the world scene and altered the military-strategic balance. Socialism was turning into a decisive factor of world development. The economic and social gains of socialism, the resolute rebuff offered to imperialist aggression and the consistent peace policy pursued by

the USSR and other socialist countries fostered the growth of progressive forces in capitalist countries and promoted the success of the national liberation movement. The positions of imperialism were weakened by the national liberation revolutions which, by the mid-50s, had destroyed the colonial system in Asia and undermined the colonial rule in Africa. All this created new, favourable international conditions for the struggle waged by the working class in the developed capitalist countries.

Part Two

THE WORKING CLASS
IN CAPITALIST COUNTRIES
AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF THE ADVANCE
OF THE FORCES OF SOCIALISM
AND DEEPENING CONTRADICTIONS
OF CAPITALISM

Chapter 3

CHANGES ON THE INTERNATIONAL AND HOME FRONTS OF THE WORKING-CLASS STRUGGLE

THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION IN 1955-1980

The twenty-five years between 1955 and 1980 saw changes of unparalleled significance and on an unprecedented scale in the international arena. During those years all those major components of the international situation that were taking shape determined the new alignment of class forces throughout the globe. These included the qualitatively new positions enjoyed by socialism in the world; the significant extension of its practical possibilities stemming from the consolidation of the economy and defence potential of the socialist community countries and from the further strengthening of their ideological and socio-political alliance; the emergence of dozens of new independent states; the transition by many of the young states to the path of socialist orientation, a course of progressive socio-economic and political development and anti-imperialist struggle; the further curtailment of the sphere of imperialist domination in the world and tangible defeats of imperialist foreign policy, above all those in the aggressive wars that the imperialists had unleashed.

A new, third stage set in in the general crisis of capitalism, and unlike the two which had gone before this one it was not directly or indirectly linked with a world war. It was the direct result of the change in the balance of forces in favour of socialism and of the weakening of imperialism.

The changes in the international situation in that period did not in any way take place in accordance with a uniform pattern, or without any temporary reverses. The forces of imperialism and reaction embarked on counter-attacks several times, unleashing international conflicts and wars and fanning tension in various parts of the globe. The pattern of international relations in that period, particularly towards the end of it, showed that the imperialists had not by any means exhausted all their reserves. On the contrary, it became clear that in certain circumstances these reserves could to

a certain extent be increased both in material and political terms.

Nor was the impact of international relations on the labour movement in the capitalist states free from fluctuations and contradictions during those years. The successes scored by the forces of socialism, peace and progress served to consolidate and accelerate the revolutionary process throughout the world to strengthen the positions held by all its detachments, including those of the working class in the capitalist countries. There was a considerable increase in the influence of the world revolutionary process and the forces involved in it on almost all major aspects of contemporary world development. Under the influence of world events the political outlook of the labour movement as a whole had broadened and also that of each of its individual detachments, and there had been an increase in the range of methods used by the latter in the struggle to uphold their own interests and those of all working people in the world. The anti-war movement had contributed to this development in a large measure—the movement for peace, disarmament and detente and against the imperialists' aggressive wars in Africa and South-East Asia and against the adoption of new means of mass destruction by the NATO countries. The struggle for peace brought closer together the members of the anti-war movement, thus facilitating the elaboration of a common approach to other pressing problems of the day both at home and abroad. The anti-war movement not only made active use of the achievements already scored with regard to the methods of working-class struggle but it also served to develop and enrich those achievements.

Yet rapid and sharp turns in world politics gave rise to certain difficulties for the labour movement. Typical of the period under discussion were the many unique combinations of circumstances in the international political arena which called for great working-class maturity and tenacity and an ability to see the true essence of various international processes at work, masked as they were by their unusual manifestations stemming from the transitional character of that particular historical period, the ability to discern its main contradiction as that between obsolescent capitalism and socialism that was destined to take its place. Naturally enough, not all groups and trends within the labour movement in the capitalist countries came to grips with this task successfully or in time.

Despite the complex and contradictory nature of world development between the mid-50s and the end of the 70s its main long-term tendencies remained unchanged. The world revolutionary process became far-reaching and took ever deeper root and its historic advance against imperialism was undeterred. The successes scored in this process multiplied and were consolidated and this, in its

turn, served to strengthen each of the currents within the overall process, thus bringing nearer the day when progressive changes would be implemented on our planet.

* * *

The second half of the 50s and the early 60s were a time when two military-political groupings in the world consolidated their positions that had taken shape in the first half of the 50s. The global offensive of reaction which had begun at the end of the 40s and beginning of the 50s had had undeniable results. The imperialists had set up a system of aggressive military alliances which embraced almost the whole of the capitalist world and was aimed first and foremost at the states of the socialist community and also against the ever-growing national liberation movement. An arms race had begun on a scale unprecedented in peace time, involving nuclear weapons as well as military programmes. Inter-state relations with the socialist countries had been poisoned for a long time to come: opportunities for mutually advantageous co-operation on the basis of equality between states of the two opposed systems in the economic or other spheres had been blocked or severely curtailed. The forces of imperialism and local reaction succeeded in scoring certain victories, as, for example, by restoring the monarchy in Iran in 1953, and by strengthening, for a while at least, the anti-popular regimes in South Korea and South Vietnam. All in all, both the economic and the military positions of capitalism in Western Europe and Japan had been consolidated and entrenched. Nevertheless, the successes scored by the reactionaries were not as significant (nor as lasting as future events were to show) as the ruling circles in the imperialist states would have wished. The main reason for this was the increasingly obvious change in the balance of power in the world arena in favour of socialism.

By the second half of the 50s the process of the formation of the world socialist system as an integrated political and ideological whole was in the main completed and this, in its turn, greatly extended the opportunities for the socialist countries to exert a constructive influence on the course of world development. Under the leadership of working-class parties in the socialist countries of Central and South-Eastern Europe the difficult first stage in laying the foundations for a socialist economic system was completed. Socialist relations of production also took root in China, North Korea, North Vietnam and Mongolia. The material and technical base was set up in these countries for establishing a modern economy, large-scale industry and intensive agriculture, for making full use of the foremost achievements of science and technology. These measures in

conjunction with the further development of fraternal co-operation and mutual assistance between the socialist countries made possible the consolidation of their economic potential and a substantial rise in the volume of industrial output, and facilitated the implementation of many important tasks of socio-economic development. All in all, during the period 1955-1964 industrial production in the socialist countries (not counting the USSR) increased two or three times over,¹ while at the same time significant changes were effected in the branch structure of the economy with the resultant increase in the share of the most progressive branches.

Particularly important for the growth of the might of the socialist system in this period, as before, was the development of the Soviet economy. In 1956, the Twentieth CPSU Congress made an assessment of the results of the selfless labour of the Soviet people led by the Communist Party during the fifth Five-Year Plan period. This plan was fulfilled ahead of schedule and signified an important new step towards the consolidation of the material and technical base of socialism and helped to strengthen the world socialist system. The Congress outlined the main trends of the Soviet economy and society, and chalked out the prospects for communist construction. The line adopted was elaborated in more detail and carried forward in the practical work of the Party, in the committed labour of the working class and the whole Soviet people and in the resolutions passed by subsequent Communist Party congresses and Central Committee plenary meetings. The implementation of the measures drawn up by the Party made it possible to score important new successes in the development of the economy. Whereas in 1950 the Soviet industry had been producing nearly 30 per cent of US industrial output, this figure rose to 47 per cent in 1957 and exceeded 65 per cent in 1964. The socialist countries' share in world industrial output also climbed rapidly: from 10 per cent in 1937 to approximately 20 per cent in 1950, 27 per cent in 1955 and 38 per cent in 1964.²

The successes in economic development enabled the USSR to achieve outstanding results in science and technology, in improving its own security and that of its allies. In October 1957, the world's first artificial satellite was launched by the Soviet Union thus graphically demonstrating socialism's scientific and technological potential. Subsequent successes scored by the USSR in the sphere of space exploration demonstrated that there was nothing coincidental about this achievement, that it truly reflected the real achievements

¹ *International Relations after the Second World War*, Vol. 3, Moscow, 1965, p. 122 (in Russian).

² *Ibid.*, p. 119.

of socialism in the socio-economic, scientific, technical and cultural fields.

The decisive social force that determined the advance of socialism was the working class of the socialist countries. In those countries its ranks were swelling all the time, and its leading role in society was becoming more and more firmly established. As a result its experience and example were exerting more influence on the consciousness and struggle of the working class in the capitalist countries.

The imperialists and reactionaries were attempting to use forces hostile to socialism still to be found in some of the socialist countries, and also the mistakes and miscalculations made in the course of socialist construction in order to sow friction between the socialist countries and to undermine the position of the new social system. These attempts failed completely. The Communist and Workers' parties in the socialist states and the whole international communist movement gleaned important political lessons from the 1956 events in Hungary that were engineered by the forces of imperialism and internal reaction. The Meeting of the Representatives of the Communist and Workers' Parties of Socialist Countries (Moscow, 1957) and also the Meeting of the Representatives of the Communist and Workers' Parties (Moscow, 1960) elaborated and expounded the main principles for relations between the socialist countries, the goals and tasks of their joint struggle for the triumph of the new social system. In 1960, a joint programme for the further increase in the political and economic might of the world socialist system, the strengthening of its role in the world revolutionary process, was elaborated to provide a basis for the adoption of fundamental principles for the socialist international division of labour.

The foreign policy of the socialist states at that period, as before, was aimed at creating an international situation as favourable as possible for the construction of socialism and communism in the countries of the socialist world community, and for the greater activity of all detachments at work in the world revolutionary process, of the forces of peace and progress. The socialist countries were waging a determined and consistent struggle to achieve greater unity and cohesion; to develop and consolidate relations of fraternal friendship and co-operation with those countries and peoples fighting to achieve national independence; to bring about a radical improvement in the system of international relations; to put an end to the cold war and the existence of foreign military bases; to bring about general and complete disarmament under strict international control; to further international co-operation on the basis of equal partnership in all possible spheres.

This struggle, which was the logical outcome of the foreign policy of the working class in power and a reflection of the interests of working people throughout the world, achieved major successes. The USSR responded resolutely and without hesitation to the aggression unleashed by Britain, France and Israel against Egypt in 1956, compelling the aggressors in a very short period to abandon their military action and withdraw their troops. The socialist states stabilised the situation on the border of the German Democratic Republic, thus reliably averting further attempts at subversive action against the democratic German state on the part of its imperialist neighbours. The independence of Cuba was resolutely protected, as was the right of the Cuban people independently to choose its path of socio-economic development. The USSR and the other countries of the socialist community adopted a consistent internationalist position with regard to the ever escalating American intervention in the countries of Indochina.

The socialist states' campaigning for peace and disarmament also made tangible and important advances. In 1963, the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapons Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water was initialled by the USSR, the United States and Great Britain, to whose signatures more than a hundred others have since been added. A number of meetings took place between the leaders of the USSR and those of the main imperialist powers. These meetings served to set in motion some improvement in international relations which was to be observed in the late 60s and early 70s.

The end of the 50s and early 60s were marked by a major surge in the national liberation movement and major successes which had a long-term effect upon the whole system of international relations. In Africa alone, more than 30 independent states emerged from the ruins of the former colonial empires in that period. The popular revolution in Cuba served to activate the national liberation struggle of the Latin American peoples. During that period almost two-thirds of the population of our planet broke free from the yoke of colonialism. There was a marked increase in the number of young national states represented at the United Nations. While in 1955 there had been a mere 23, in 1964 Asian and African countries already occupied 59 of the 115 UN seats (35 of which were those of African states).¹

The Bandung (1955), Belgrade (1961) and Cairo (1964) conferences of the heads of state and government from the non-aligned countries laid the foundations for the policy of non-alignment and promoted that policy as an important factor and integral part of in-

¹ *International Relations after the Second World War*, Vol. 3, p. 500.

ternational relations in general. These conferences, in particular the Cairo one, had an openly anti-imperialist flavour.

As the colonial empires collapsed and the independence of the former colonies and semi-colonies was declared officially, their peoples were confronted by new, more complex tasks linked with the urgent need to select a path of development and to ensure real, not just nominal, independence from the former colonial powers and other imperialist states, to create an internal economic and political structure that would encourage progressive change. A consistent anti-imperialist struggle was the fundamental condition for the solution of these tasks. In this struggle as in their efforts to surmount the heavy economic and social legacy of colonialism, the peoples of the young national states were given tremendous help and support by the countries of the socialist community.

For the capitalist system the late 50s and early 60s were a period of big upheavals both at home and abroad. Conspicuous changes also took place in the balance of power and in the relations between the capitalist countries; there was a long decline in the share of the US in the imperialist economy in favour of the West European and Japanese imperialists, although the United States retained its place of prominence in imperialist policy and even enhanced its military role within the capitalist system.

The uneven economic development in the most advanced capitalist countries found expression in the development of two parallel trends within Western Europe. The contradictions between the main European capitalist countries were to be observed at the same time as contradictions between those states taken together and the United States. Yet active integration processes within the capitalist economy served as a means of surmounting imperialist contradictions at least in part. This latter trend led to the formation of two rival groupings in Western Europe: the EEC (1957) and EFTA (1959).

The uneven economic development in the capitalist countries also had political consequences. Occupied as they were with their own problems, the West European states and Japan left it to the United States to carry out its policing role in the developing world which the ruling circles of that country were only too happy to assume and to pay the price involved. This development, however, did not in any way reflect any major differences between the USA and the other capitalist countries. The imperialists of Western Europe and Japan obviously no longer had the practical opportunities either economically, or more significantly, militarily speaking, to fulfill such a role and for their own particular reasons were not indeed very eager to help the United States to carry out a policy aimed at satisfying first and foremost American interests and objectives. As a result of this it depended to a large extent on the US ruling cir-

cles in the late 50s and early 60s what kind of response capitalism as a system would make to a new stage in its general crisis.

In its relations with the USSR and the other countries of the socialist community in the early 60s the US administration staked a great deal on the extension of its military arsenal, on the race in strategic arms. At the same time it set out to make wider use, in its relations with the socialist countries than before, of new methods, including negotiations, in situations, where American imperialism could no longer rely on sheer force in its foreign policy. In relations with the young national states and the various national liberation movements the main emphasis was on the doctrine and practice of so-called anti-insurgency wars, i.e. the blatant and direct exploitation of US armed forces and support for all the most reactionary forces and regimes in the developing countries and also on the elaboration of new methods and forms of neocolonialism. Finally in relations with the other imperialist countries special importance was attached to the involvement of the countries of Western Europe in the elaboration and implementation of NATO nuclear strategy in keeping with US objectives, and to greater cohesion of the imperialists' major military groupings in a single all-embracing complex. Reflections of the imperialist offensive strategy in international relations in practice were provided by the Caribbean crisis in the autumn of 1962, the imperialist intervention in the Congo (1960-1964), the beginning of open military aggression by the USA in Vietnam in 1964 and the US intervention in the Dominican Republic in 1965.

A new socio-economic and political pattern of international relations came into being during the late 50s and early 60s as a result of the world revolutionary process. This meant that capitalism would from now on have to reckon with the existence of the international socialist community and its growing influence, with the continuing upsurge of the national liberation movement in other parts of the world. Capitalism had lost its earlier possibilities for direct "extra-economic" plundering of the majority of mankind which traditional colonialism had provided. Furthermore, in various parts of the world that had only recently provided capitalism with its reliable "rear", the prerequisites and conditions for fundamental socio-economic change were emerging. This led the imperialist states to mobilise to the utmost the resources of capitalism both at home and abroad and in the technical-economic and socio-political spheres.

The emergence of socialism as a leading factor in world development and other positive shifts changed the balance of class forces on an international and national scale. This gave rise to profound changes in the social policy of the bourgeoisie, compelling it to modify its relations with its own working class to suit the new

world situation, particularly at a time when the labour movement, many other strata of the population and political forces in the capitalist countries reacted sharply to the most blatant manifestations of the aggressive nature of imperialism, whether it be the wars waged by France in Indochina and Algeria, the attempts to set up multi-lateral nuclear forces in Western Europe and much else besides. The bourgeoisie's policy was not to let situations escalate into social conflicts that would be particularly tense or dangerous for the existing order or that would make the class struggle flare up. Opportunities for implementing this policy were inevitably curtailed both by the laws inherent in capitalism and also by the interests of capitalist exploitation and the activity of the most reactionary forces. Nevertheless, the endeavour by a large section of the bourgeoisie to avoid extreme forms of class conflict within the imperialist states had a noticeable effect on the actual position of the proletariat, on the increasingly effective class action.

Under the influence of these same international and internal factors in the foreign policy of a certain section of the ruling classes in the capitalist countries, a tendency gradually emerged towards peaceful co-existence with the socialist countries. It had come to the fore as early as the mid-50s in such international events as the signing of the State Treaty with Austria, the Geneva agreements on Indochina and the summit conference of four heads of state that took place also in Geneva. It found expression in the increasingly frequent contacts and negotiations between representatives and leaders of socialist and capitalist states. In the early 60s the tendency towards the peaceful co-existence of states with opposing social systems had not yet become predominant in international politics but it was developing, growing stronger and winning ever more support in the West. This tendency resulted from the whole trend of international life at this time, the course of the world revolutionary process, the changes in the balance of class forces in the international arena. One of the ingredients of this evolution was the growing strength of the labour movement, and also that of the peace movement closely linked with the former in the advanced capitalist countries. This last circumstance stood out particularly clearly in the second half of the 60s, when broad strata of society in the capitalist countries campaigned for a relaxation of world tension.

Yet the opposite tendency was still strong as events in the second half of the 60s were to show. It was precisely during those years that the imperialists' foreign-policy adventures endangering world peace were launched, in particular in the Middle East (the Six Day War in June 1967) and in Indochina (where American aggression against Vietnam reached its peak in 1968). These and other aggressive acts by the imperialists introduced considerable

tension into the international situation leading to various crisis situations, poisoning the political atmosphere in the world more than ever. These adventures demonstrated the danger and futility of aggressive policies in the contemporary situation and led not merely the general public, but also the ruling circles in a number of Western countries, to look for new, more realistic and constructive paths to resolve controversial international problems. Aggressive actions by the imperialists made the world situation more difficult and they brought in their wake a high degree of political and purely military danger. Precisely for this reason they made it imperative to search for political ways out of the aggression spiral and the arms race into which the policies of the most irresponsible imperialist circles were drawing international relations. This search, when organised sincerely and on a basis of good will, always met with responsive understanding from the socialist community, which had come forward in the late 60s with a number of important new foreign policy initiatives.

By the end of the 60s socialism appeared as a stronger force in all respects. In 1971, at the 24th Congress of the CPSU it was stressed that during the 25 years of its existence the world socialist system had scored enormous successes: "From the standpoint of development of revolutionary theory and practice these have been exceptionally fruitful years."¹ The 70s were a period of further advance for the socialist countries towards advanced socialist society, towards communism. While in 1950 the CMEA countries were producing only a fifth of the industrial output of the industrially advanced capitalist states, by 1975 this figure had risen to two-thirds. In 1950, the industrial output of the USSR came to some 30 per cent of the American figure, but by 1975 it had reached over 80 per cent.² By the mid-70s the socialist countries were steadily overtaking the developed capitalist countries in rates of economic growth, in rates of growth for capital investment and investment in scientific research, and, moreover, by a considerable margin.

The successful implementation of the Comprehensive Programme for Socialist Economic Integration of the CMEA Member Countries, adopted in 1971, made it easier to accomplish current economic tasks to further the growth of the economic, scientific and technical potential of the socialist community as a whole and to raise the socialist countries' co-operation and mutual assistance to a new, higher level. The CMEA exercised greater influence on world economic relations, the number of its members increased and the sphere

¹ *24th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Documents*, Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, Moscow, 1971, p. 9.

² *International Yearbook. Politics and Economics*, Moscow, 1976, p. 12 (in Russian).

of its action expanded. Political co-operation between the socialist countries and the co-ordination of their foreign policy endeavours developed and became more effective. During this period the socialist countries came forward with a number of important joint initiatives in the sphere of collective security, disarmament, peaceful settlement for the most urgent international conflicts, in particular those in the Middle East and Indochina. The Warsaw Treaty military organisation was also made more effective and streamlined during this period.

The active foreign policy of the socialist community stemming from the widening opportunities for the world socialist system and from its solidarity with other detachments of the world revolutionary process and with progressive forces throughout the world made it possible to score impressive successes in the international arena. The socialist countries resolutely repulsed the aggressive schemes of the American imperialists in Indochina. The selflessness and heroism of the Vietnamese people, combined with the crucial support for their just cause provided by the Soviet Union and other socialist countries and progressive forces throughout the globe, ended in a crushing defeat for the most large-scale attempt by the imperialists, since the Second World War, to make short work of a socialist state and suppress a national liberation revolution. After Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia achieved their freedom. The most significant result of the joint efforts of the socialist states was the recognition of the GDR's sovereignty worldwide and its membership of the United Nations, the international ratification of the inviolability of the Western borders of the German Democratic Republic, Poland and Czechoslovakia. Socialism meanwhile had taken firm root in Cuban soil, the international status and authority of Cuba had been noticeably consolidated.

Another fact of no small importance for the development of relations between states of the two systems, and for the climate in the international arena as a whole, in the late 60s and early 70s was that the socialist community had withstood the tests to which certain of its members had been subjected and had emerged from such tests stronger, more experienced and more cohesive. This meant that a crushing blow had been dealt to the assumptions encouraged in certain quarters in the West in the late 60s that socialism might be weakened and undermined from within and that a split might appear within the socialist community.

A highly sensitive factor for the most aggressive imperialist circles was the achievement by the USSR of strategic parity with the USA with regard to missiles and nuclear weapons at the end of the 60s and beginning of the 70s which brought a large number of military and political developments in its wake. While with the pre-

vious balance of power in this sphere it had been relatively easy for the USA to provoke international crises, like the Caribbean crisis of 1962 or the Middle East crisis of 1967, in the new situation such a policy made it unacceptable for the United States to run such high risks, from the point of view of its own interests.

Another important characteristic of the system of international relations at that time was the new role that the developing countries had now assumed in world politics and economics. The general shift in the world political situation served to promote the further advance of the national liberation movement. By the mid-70s the emergence of new national states in place of former colonies and semi-colonies had been almost complete. The national liberation movement had entered a new stage, the main features of which were the endeavour of the overwhelming majority of the developing states to achieve real socio-economic progress and the struggle of the developing countries for the right of real and not just nominal control over their own natural resources and for a restructuring of the world economic order on the basis of just, democratic principles.

This brought to the fore in the field of international relations the question as to the reshaping of the whole system of international economic ties based on the privileged position of the largest monopolist associations and imperialist powers. The capitalists reacted to the just demands of the developing countries with the conception of so-called "economic security" that was to become widespread in the West during the late 70s and which presented the West's system of economic and trade links as an integral part of its overall "national security interests". A further ramification of this conception in the late 70s and early 80s was the decision taken—within the framework of the Carter doctrine—regarding the possibility that American nuclear weapons might be used in the area of the Persian Gulf allegedly to "protect the security" of the oil routes and also so as to set up a rapid deployment force with which to effect intervention in various parts of the globe.

Despite all socio-economic differences and the far from uniform nature of the home and foreign policies of the developing states, their actions to restructure the world economic order, to uphold the principles of equality in international relations, a renunciation of force and threat of force and non-interference in the internal affairs of other states were objectively directed against imperialism, its economic domination and the traditional forms and methods of its policy.

The second half of the 60s and the early and mid-70s were marked by a further increase in the difference between the levels of economic and political development from one imperialist power to another.

In Western Europe and Japan, the process of state-monopolistic economic regulation had progressed further than in the United States in conditions of less acute confrontation over this question within the ruling class and of less severe cyclical recessions in production. It was also clear that the West European countries with their experience of capitalist integration, co-ordinated monetary and financial policies, on the one hand, and socio-economic policies, on the other, were better prepared for solving problems arising in relations with developing countries than Japan and in particular the USA. All these factors made the development of the main imperialist centres of power more uneven and led to changes in the economic balance of power within the capitalist system that were not in the United States' favour.

The beginning of the 70s was the time of serious setbacks for the imperialist policy of cold war and military confrontation, when there was a reduction in international tension and an improved political atmosphere in the world. The decisive contribution towards this was that of the consistent and principled policy of the socialist community countries led by the USSR aimed at the implementation of their Programme for Peace and later of their Programme for the Further Fight for Peace and International Co-operation, for the Freedom and Independence of the Peoples, adopted at the 24th and 25th CPSU congresses.¹ The policies of the socialist community were aimed at curbing the aggressive acts of the imperialists and at the same time to create a firm and broad base for the peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems and to develop mutually advantageous co-operation between them on the basis of equality.

Thanks to the efforts of the socialist states and many other countries and despite stubborn resistance from imperialist circles it proved possible in the late 60s and early 70s to advance in certain spheres towards restrictions on the arms race, even in the most difficult field of all, that of strategic arms. Despite attempts by the opponents of peaceful coexistence to set off one state against another, tangible progress was achieved, particularly in Europe, towards a normalisation of relations between states with different social systems and the establishment of political contacts, commercial and economic ties, scientific, technical and cultural links between them. Particularly important in this connection was the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe convened on the initiative of

¹ For further details regarding the implementation of the foreign policy directives of the 24th and 25th CPSU congresses, see N. N. Inozemtsev, *The Leninist Path for the International Policies of the CPSU*, Moscow, 1978 (in Russian).

socialist diplomacy which had put a great deal of effort into this task. This Conference and its Final Act adopted at Helsinki marked a defeat for the cold war proponents, the forces of reaction in Europe and worldwide, and a major breakthrough for realism and good will.

As events were to demonstrate in the mid-70s, against this background of detente, the struggle of progressive, democratic forces for the economic and political rights of the working people and against reactionary regimes developed more freely and on a wider scale. In April 1974 in Portugal and in July 1974 in Greece, fascist dictatorships were overthrown and prospects of democratic development now opened up before these countries. Events such as the decision by the new Portuguese regime to put an end to that country's colonial war in Africa and Greece's withdrawal from NATO's military organisation, possessed in their turn positive significance for an improved international situation. In 1976-77, the Franco regime in Spain virtually fell apart and the country embarked upon a complex period of democratisation needed to wipe out the legacy of Francoism.

The change in the international situation created favourable conditions for the advance of the national liberation movement and enabled the peoples of Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Angola and other newly-free countries to score historic victories.

Successes in the world revolutionary process, the increasingly effective struggle waged by the forces of socialism, peace and progress for positive change in the world, led to mounting opposition from the most reactionary circles in the imperialist camp. This was also due to the serious internal difficulties which capitalism had to confront in the 70s: the economic crisis of 1974-1975 and recessions, unprecedented rates of inflation, an exacerbation of internal social problems and contradictions between imperialist countries. It was pointed out at the 26th Congress of the CPSU: "The difficulties experienced by capitalism also affect its policy, including foreign policy. The struggle over basic issues of the capitalist countries' foreign-policy course has grown more bitter."¹ Moreover, the nature of the clashes within the ruling classes of the imperialist states had become noticeably more complex.

The overall course of events in the 70s confirmed Lenin's analysis of the role of force as the main spontaneous regulating factor for capitalist relations in all spheres of imperialist foreign policy. Clearer distinctions were, however, drawn between the various approaches shown by the ruling class to the paths and methods which might enable it to use force in the international arena. Some mo-

¹ *Documents and Resolutions. The 26th Congress of the CPSU*, p. 27.

nopolistic groupings and their ideologues, under the influence of growing economic problems, foreign-policy setbacks and the decline in the confidence about the future of capitalism came to the conclusion that it was necessary to set up new, more sophisticated means and techniques for a policy based on a show of strength, paying particular attention to consolidating solidarity of world capitalism and to achieving greater co-ordination between the domestic and foreign policies of the capitalist countries. Others, putting forward as their main political credo the demand that more active use be made of "tried" and traditional forms of aggressive policy, place the main emphasis on the relatively narrower selfish interests of individual capitalist states. Yet in a certain section of the ruling class, among the more realistically-inclined Western political leaders, an awareness was gradually emerging to the effect that in the then conditions complex and controversial international problems could only be solved in an atmosphere of detente and constructive co-operation between the states of the two opposing social systems as equal partners.

The forces of imperialism and reaction, which in the early 80s embarked on a counter-offensive aimed at reversing the major improvement in the international situation and were inspired by the desire to restore to imperialism its former power and influence, were counting on the internal reserves of their own system. At the same time they were bearing in mind certain features of international life in the late 70s and early 80s and promoted their subsequent development along a course that would serve the interests of the imperialists.

One of these features was the profound economic and socio-political differentiation of the developing countries and the vastly uneven nature of their internal economic and social development. While some newly-independent countries had embarked on the path of socialist orientation or were developing along socialist lines and implementing progressive socio-economic reforms to put an end to the colonial legacy and to all types of relations based on exploitation without exception, in others capitalism had emerged as a dominant economic structure. In the latter half of the 1970s, a number of Asian, African and Latin American countries saw the appearance of pro-imperialist regimes which had the direct support of local reactionaries and which conspired with the imperialist, neo-colonialist circles from the West to participate with them in the offensive against the progressive national-democratic states and the national liberation movement.

Making full use of the above developments and in an effort to hold back the recent advances in the world, the forces of imperialism, in particular the United States and NATO, began speeding up

the arms race aimed at achieving military superiority over the USSR and other socialist countries and organising provocations against the socialist and other independent states. A further complication in the international situation now took place. The central issue in the tense confrontation in the international arena was the destiny of detente, peace and disarmament, and warding off attacks by the imperialist circles against freedom, independence and security of the peoples of the world.

Against this background the Soviet Union and all countries of the socialist community again demonstrate firm resolution in their foreign policy in the Leninist tradition, consistently upholding peace and working towards that goal in practice, as they ensure the security of the socialist countries and promote international security in general, defiantly repulsing imperialist provocations and claims and at the same time come forward with wide-scale initiatives designed to promote and extend detente, to limit the arms race and effect disarmament and to foster constructive co-operation between the states of two diametrically opposed systems, between all countries everywhere.

In the more tense international situation at the beginning of the 80s, new proposals to consolidate international security, put forward at the 26th Congress of the CPSU (February 1981), played a particularly important role. These presupposed a considerable extension of the geographical areas that engulfed confidence-building measures in military matters, in accordance with the Helsinki Final Act; the discussion of questions linked with Afghanistan in conjunction with questions of security in the Persian Gulf; new Soviet-American talks on the limitation of strategic arms and agreement on the limited deployment of specific delivery systems of nuclear warheads, including a moratorium on the stationing in Europe of new medium-range nuclear missiles and a number of other measures of a military or political character. A clear demonstration of the active and peace-loving character of Soviet foreign policy was to be found in Leonid Brezhnev's declaration of the Soviet Union's readiness to engage in dialogue with the United States at all levels, including the summit level as a decisive link in such a dialogue.¹

The states of the socialist community are consistent and unshakable in their support for the just struggle by the peoples for their freedom and independence; they take practical steps to achieve still closer fraternal co-operation with one another in the political, economic, defence and other spheres.

International affairs throughout the 70s had exerted a powerful

¹ *Documents and Resolutions. The 26th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, p. 31.

influence on the course of class struggle in the capitalist countries, on the labour movement. Against a background of detente the anti-Communists and all enemies of the Soviet Union no longer enjoyed such a strong position; the labour movement and other democratic forces were able to campaign more actively against reactionary policies of the imperialists both within the capitalist countries and also in the international arena.

Increased interest in issues central to international issues and to the search for their solution, to the elaboration of its own foreign-policy platform as a direct continuation of the socio-economic demands of the working class, was one of the most characteristic trends to be observed in the labour movement during the 70s.¹ This found expression in the closer co-operation between various detachments within the labour movement, in the constructive dialogue on questions of detente and disarmament and acute international problems between Communists and Social Democrats, between trade unions of varying political and ideological complexions.

Broadly speaking, international developments during the 70s confirmed as correct the conclusion drawn by the Communists to the effect that the reduction of international tension, the affirmation in relations between states of two different systems of the principles of peaceful coexistence "creates favourable conditions for the full independence and the self-determined development of countries and promotes the struggle of the peoples for economic and social progress. It creates more favourable conditions of struggle for the movements for democratic and socialist transformation in the capitalist countries."²

Hence the continuing ambivalence in the policy of the imperialists, obliged, under pressure of circumstances, to accept in certain spheres detente and peaceful coexistence in their relations with the socialist countries, but at the same time endeavouring, wherever opportunities presented themselves and their strength allowed, to oppose progressive change. During the 70s the experience of the world revolutionary process demonstrated that "imperialism will stop at nothing, discarding all semblance of any kind of democracy, if a serious threat arises to the domination of monopoly capital and its political agents. It is prepared to trample upon the sovereignty of states and upon all legality to say nothing of humanism."³ Unity and cohesion of all detachments of the world revolutionary move-

¹ For more details, see chapters 7-14 of this volume.

² *For Peace, Security, Cooperation and Social Progress in Europe, Berlin, June 29-30, 1976*, Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, Moscow, 1976, p. 40.

³ *Documents and Resolutions, The 26th Congress of the CPSU*, p. 36.

ment constitute a well-trying and reliable weapon of the working class in its struggle for the complete and conclusive liberation of the working people throughout the world.

THE TECHNOLOGICAL REVOLUTION, STATE-MONOPOLY CAPITALISM AND THE WORKING CLASS

Changes which took place from the 50s onwards in the productive forces and relations of production under capitalism provided the foundation for the development of the working class in the capitalist countries and hence for all the activity of the labour movement.¹

One of the most important aspects of the development of capitalism between the 1950s and the 1980s was the technological revolution affecting the pattern of social productive forces. The changes involved affected all the fundamental elements of that pattern, all spheres of socio-economic life.

The main characteristic of the scientific and technological revolution which sets in apart from all major technological revolutions of the past is the fundamental change it brought about in the relationship between science and industrial production, the transformation of science into a direct productive force in society. This revolution in productive forces was prepared by previous scientific advance and major scientific discoveries in the 20th century, such as the theory of relativity, quantum physics, the theory of elementary particles, cybernetics, microbiology, polymer chemistry and so on, which had given a powerful boost to technological progress. In the course of the scientific and technological revolution research work, or the "discoveries industry", had become an integral and essential part of productive activity: in all the main capitalist countries expenditure on research and development had been increasing two or two and a half times as quickly as capital investment as a whole since the mid-50s. Since that time science and industry began to form a single complex on the basis of the latest achievements in science and technology. Thus, this period saw a new synthesis of science, technology and industrial production. Research centres and laboratories were being integrated into the overall structure of large firms; universities and other scientific establishments were catering more

¹ For further details, see *The Political Economy of Modern Monopoly Capitalism*, Vols. 1-2, Moscow, 1975; S. L. Vygodsky, *Present-day Capitalism (Experience of a Theoretical Analysis)*, Moscow, 1975; S. I. Tyulpanov, V. L. Sheinis, *Current Problems in the Political Economy of Modern Capitalism*, Leningrad, 1973; Yu. A. Vasilchuk, *The Scientific and Technological Revolution and the Working Class under Capitalism*, Moscow, 1980 (all in Russian). For works by Marxists from other countries see *Le capitalisme monopoliste d'Etat*, Vols. 1-2, Paris, 1971; *Imperialismus heute. Der staatsmonopolistische Kapitalismus in Westdeutschland*, Berlin, 1967.

and more directly for the needs of industry. The time it took for industry to master and incorporate scientific discoveries in production was reduced from 30 years (at the beginning of the 20th century) to a mere 5-7 years in the 60s and 70s.¹

The scientific and technological revolution found expression in the far-reaching and highly diverse changes in *machinery* and the *techniques* of production. Fundamentally new means of labour appeared on the scene and were widely adopted: programme controlled machine-tools, integrated automated systems, and industrial robots. The mechanical processing of materials was being replaced more and more by electro-chemical and electro-physical processing. Sources of power also underwent change: there was a sudden leap in the importance of oil and natural gas in the fuel and power balance, and nuclear energy began to be used. In connection with the energy crisis prospects are now being investigated for the use of synthetic liquid fuel, solar energy, geothermal power, wave and wind power. One of the main fields in which technological progress was to be observed was the wide-scale introduction of advanced chemical techniques in production, the scale and economic effectiveness of which were on a par with mechanisation or automation (in the United States, for example, the share of chemical fibres in materials used in the textile industry increased from 10.1 to 57 per cent between 1940 and 1970.² This and other spheres of technological progress led to the widespread use of raw materials with preset properties (plastics, synthetic fibres, chip board, etc.) and to major changes in the raw-material base for industry and construction projects.

One of the most important aspects of the scientific and technological revolution which has far-reaching socio-economic consequences was the restructuring of agricultural production on the basis of its mechanisation, electrification and more intensive use of fertilizers, and the introduction of the latest methods in selection and genetic investigation. This led to a rapid rise in labour productivity in agriculture and to an enormous economy in man-hours.

The appearance and wide-scale adoption of computers—fundamentally new work tools—had a revolutionising impact on the whole of man's working life. Between 1960 and 1970 the number of computers in use in the developed capitalist countries multiplied several dozens of times. A new boost to this process was provided by the creation of cheap computers—microprocessors. Successful miniaturisation paved the way for a new stage in the automation of production, which could now be controlled electronically at all levels,

¹ *The Political Economy of Modern Monopoly Capitalism*, Vol. 1, p. 90.

² *Ibid.*

ranging from single components of equipment to major production complexes. Not only do computers provide a powerful stimulus for the development of large-scale automation and self-regulating production processes but they also lead to an economy of intellectual work, to an enormous rise in the productivity of man's intellectual activity in management and a number of other spheres, thus increasing the opportunities for that intellectual effort to be devoted to creative tasks.

One of the most important socio-economic aspects of the scientific and technological revolution, a direct consequence of and at the same time prerequisite for technical and technological advances is the profound change it has brought about in the *nature and content of labour*. The reduction in the share of physical work and simple brain work in productive activity and the increased role of the intellectual (and that includes creative) functions of labour in the management of complex systems and processes constitute the main trend in this sphere, which is constantly being accelerated by the ongoing scientific and technological revolution. As will be pointed out below, it has an important impact on the evolution of the qualifications and skills patterns required of the working class and other strata of the working people. It is essential at the same time to stress as forcefully as possible, that we are confronted here by a trend which in the early stage of the scientific and technological revolution could not, of course, affect the nature and content of the labour of the whole work force to the same extent. Under capitalism, where every technical innovation is possible only insofar as it furthers capitalist exploitation and increases profit, the capitalist interest in many situations holds back the development of the trend in question and preserves technically backward types of labour. Nevertheless, capitalism of the 50s, 60s and 70s, taken as a whole, was marked by major changes not only in the material aspects of productive forces—the instruments and means of production, but also in its qualitative aspects, in the structure of its most important element—the aggregate labourer, since a thorough change had now come about in the role of man in production. This whole range of changes was inextricably bound up with the transition from a predominantly extensive type of economic growth to an intensive one, a feature typical of the capitalist economy of the present period: more effective production on the basis of scientific and technological progress, improved organisation and management, and a corresponding growth in the proportion of brain work and labour involving complex skills become the most important factors in the multiplication of social wealth.

Changes in the *structure of the capitalist economy* stemming from the impact of the scientific and technological revolution have

exerted a strong influence on the composition and structure of the working class.

First of all, the scientific and technological revolution and the increased productivity stemming from it particularly in material production, the broadening spheres of management, information technology and education, etc., and also the growth of the bureaucratic machine that was an inherent feature of state-monopoly capitalism, and a number of other social processes greatly enhanced the importance of such branches of the economy as the distribution and services sectors. In the 70s, in a number of capitalist countries, between thirty-five and forty per cent of the work force were employed in these spheres, while in the United States, Canada, Britain, Belgium, the Netherlands and Sweden these sectors accounted for more of the work force than material production.

Secondly, changes in the balance between industry and agriculture had also taken place and the balance had swung in industry's favour. In the majority of advanced capitalist countries, industry employed significant sections of the work force. In countries such as the United States, Britain, West Germany, and France agriculture in the 1970s accounted for merely between two and ten per cent of the work force.¹

Thirdly, structural changes had taken place within industry itself: the extractive industries and various branches of light industry now accounted for a smaller share than before, while mechanical engineering, particularly electro-mechanical engineering, the electronic, chemical and electric power industries became more prominent. In the United States, mechanical engineering accounted for 30 per cent of the whole of industrial output in the 70s and the chemical and electric power industries for close on 15.²

Fourthly, and lastly, as is clear from the above, the scientific and technological revolution went hand in hand with a significant enhancement of the economic role of science and scientific establishments.

These processes created the economic basis for substantial changes in the structure of the working class, in the semi-proletarian strata of society and those being gradually drawn into the proletariat, and in the network of its social ties and alliances.³ Despite bourgeois theories announcing the decline of the former role of the working class in the economy of post-industrial society, these proc-

¹ *Yearbook of National Accounts Statistics*, Vol. II, New York, 1977, pp. 84, 109-115.

² *Ibid.*, p. 292.

³ See Chapter 4 of this volume.

esses served to strengthen the leading role of that class, and particularly that of its industrial nucleus, in economic progress. This was reflected, in particular, in the fact that the growing detachments of the proletariat were drawn first and foremost into the most dynamic and technically progressive branches of production.

The growth in concentration of production resulting from the scientific and technological revolution had a direct bearing upon the working class and the labour movement. This found expression, first of all, in the wider scale of industrial enterprises, in the concentration of the larger part of production and the work force from individual branches of the economy in the biggest enterprises. By the end of the 60s in the United States, France and Japan factories with a thousand workers or more had produced 36.9, 42.1 and 34.4 per cent respectively of the gross industrial output. In such branches of American industry as mechanical engineering for transport, metallurgy, electro-mechanical engineering and instrument-making 76.8, 53.8, 52.7 and 43.3 per cent of the respective work force were concentrated in factories employing a thousand or more people.¹ Concentration increased rapidly not merely in industry but also in the services sector. In the US retail trade, for example, outlets for firms with a turnover of a million dollars or more accounted for only 2.8 per cent of the total number in 1967, but these employed 34.2 per cent of the work force, and their share in the overall volume of the retail trade was 42.8 per cent. Yet the process of concentration affecting the size of individual factories was far from uniform. In a number of branches of industry, particularly in light industry and in highly concentrated branches such as mechanical engineering and metallurgy, medium-sized factories (employing between 100 and 500) remained for the most part stable and maintained the same share of industrial output as before. In the non-industrial branches of the economy, medium-sized and small enterprises were still more typical.²

Secondly, the scientific and technological revolution served to accelerate significantly the process of the monopolistic centralisation of production and capital at the level of individual companies, which now began to assume new forms. In its pace and scale this process was far in excess of the concentration at the level of individual enterprises and it led to a sharp increase in the monopolistic character of modern capitalism. The 200 largest companies in the US processing industries accounted for 30 per cent of total output in 1947, but this figure had risen to 44 per cent in 1970, although they account-

¹ *Mirovaya Ekonomika i Mezhdunarodniye Otnosheniya*, No. 1, 1970, pp. 153-156; No. 2, p. 147.

² *The Political Economy of Modern Monopoly Capitalism*, Vol. 1, pp. 117-119.

ed for less than one per cent of all the enterprises in the field, despite owning over 60 per cent of its capital. In Japan, at the beginning of the 70s, the largest companies, which made up 0.9 per cent of the total number, owned approximately 86 per cent of the total share capital; in the Federal Republic of Germany, 4.7 per cent of companies owned 64.7 per cent of the share capital.¹

A new phenomenon in the development of the monopolistic concentration was the fact that it now extended beyond national frontiers, and powerful multinational companies began to emerge to play a far greater role in the economy of capitalism. The process of monopolisation was particularly intensive in those branches of production brought into being by the scientific and technological revolution. The American concern IBM accounts for between 70 and 75 per cent of the computers produced in the capitalist world. Yet in the main capitalist countries a small number of very large monopolies completely dominate some other branches of industry. In the United States motor industry, the three largest companies produce 90 per cent of the cars, in Britain four companies produce 75 per cent, in France four companies produce all cars, while in Italy one company accounts for 90 per cent of car production. A similar situation is to be found in the oil-processing, chemical, and metallurgical industries and in a number of other branches. For the capitalist economy the 50s and 60s were a period in which many firms merged and in which medium-sized and small enterprises became far more dependent on the largest monopolistic companies, so that many of the former virtually turned into branches of the monopolies.

One of the most characteristic features of the monopolistic concentration in the 50s and 60s was the widespread appearance of so-called vertical integration and diversification, i.e. the growth of the power and economic importance of the monopolies (concerns and conglomerates), each of which embraced not just one particular branch of industry (this was typical of the early 20th century) but several. In the United States, the number of major companies operating in more than 15 branches of industry doubled in the 60s. One and the same firm would be producing consumer goods and industrial equipment, extracting raw materials and processing them, becoming involved in the services sector and banking.

Increased concentration of production and capital led, as in the past, to a growing concentration of the working class, and to the latter becoming more closely tied to large-scale production. This meant that the proletariat was in a better position to fight for its rights and had better prospects for organising and co-ordinating its

¹ Ibid., pp. 126-127.

activities, and for bringing its influence to bear on economic and social life. The further monopolisation of the capitalist economy and the new forms and trends which this process assumed under the impact of the scientific and technological revolution, helped to overcome the former divisions between trades and branches of industry that had divided certain detachments of the proletariat one from the other. Parallel to the increase in the internal diversity of its composition as regards professional skills and qualifications, new preconditions for the development of the working class as a single social entity were taking shape.

Under the influence of monopolisation in the capitalist world a new alignment of social forces is coming to the surface: new prominence has been acquired by the role of the monopoly bourgeoisie in the exploitation of the working class and other strata of the working population, thus indirectly preparing the ground for the coming together of the various groups of the proletariat and non-proletarian strata and of working people from the capitalist and developing countries in their struggle against the single international system of monopolistic oppression.

The significance of the scientific and technological revolution for the working class in the capitalist countries is by no means limited to its influence on its position and development, on the immediate conditions of its life and struggle. Against the background of the peaceful coexistence of the two opposed social systems the utilisation of the scientific and technological revolution is becoming one of the most important sectors for the struggle and competition between socialism and capitalism: as that utilisation develops the general crisis of capitalism will become more comprehensive and the prospects for the victory of socialism on a worldwide scale will improve.

The capitalists went out of their way to use the scientific and technological revolution so as to achieve economic and military superiority over socialism, to consolidate their class domination and intensify their exploitation of the working class and suppression of the revolutionary movement. At the same time as the scientific and technological revolution advances, it has become a powerful factor in the exacerbation of the basic contradiction inherent in capitalism.

Firstly, the revolution in productive forces leads to a vast growth of their social character. This finds expression in the increasing scale of production, in the greater interdependence of all its links (and not merely on a national, but also on an international scale), in increased importance of research work, which cannot be carried out with the necessary degree of efficiency without mobilisation of social resources and social organisation of the research. The frame-

work of capitalist ownership is becoming more and more restrictive for the new productive forces.

Secondly, the scientific and technological revolution results in an abrupt increase in the pace of all economic and social processes, leads to rapid change in the volume and structure of consumption, in the conditions and way of life and brings out the closer relationship between those processes and production. The normal functioning of the industrial and social fabric of society calls for a broad-scale advance in social consumption and the system of public services, such as health, education, transport and environmental protection. Spontaneous socio-economic development that is not subject to social control inevitably, in these conditions, leads to catastrophic results for society, for the working masses.

Thirdly, the enormous scale of the social consequences of the scientific and technological revolution has exacerbated to an unprecedented extent the problem of goals of economic activity, and of priorities in socio-economic development. The combined power of science and production in the second half of the 20th century creates hitherto unknown opportunities for the enrichment of men's material and spiritual life and at the same time can loom as a Moloch disrupting and devastating men's lives, depriving these lives of any firm material or moral foundation and threatening men with total destruction as a result of thermonuclear or bacteriological war and annihilating their natural environment. It is into such a monster that scientific and technological progress will turn, if it is used without any control to promote private-capitalist profit and exploit and escalate the arms race. In the hands of the monopolies new productive forces turn, in large measure, into destructive forces. Enormous funds and effort are spent on the creation, accumulation and the perfection of ever more powerful means of mass destruction.

As the scientific and technological revolution advances, its role as a factor that deepens the "old" and exacerbates the new economic and social contradictions inherent in capitalism comes more and more to the fore. The instability of the position of working people in production and the growth of unemployment, the inadequate provision of what society needs in terms of education and health care, crises of urban development, the ecological, raw-material and energy, and currency crises, the growth of inflation, aggravated to a large extent by the militarisation of the economy, all these and many other phenomena linked in one way or another with the scientific and technological revolution can in the final analysis be traced back to one common denominator—the increasing economic and social instability of the capitalist system. This became ever more apparent in the late 70s and early 80s.

The scientific and technological revolution has thus underscored

the fundamental problems intrinsic to that social system and demonstrated the bankruptcy of capitalism, its inability to place scientific and technological progress at the service of social progress. New opportunities are now at hand for the working class in the capitalist countries to wage their fight for the socialist transformation of society and there are new stimuli for this struggle and for an advance in the social awareness of the proletariat.

* * *

In social relations, including production, and in the ideological and political superstructure of capitalist society the development of monopoly capitalism into state-monopoly capitalism (SMC) was the crucial process determining changes in the conditions in which the labour movement was able to act. This process was closely bound up with new developments in productive forces ushered in by the scientific and technological revolution: the continuing scientific and technological revolution stimulated the development of SMC in the capitalist countries. In its turn, the restructuring of the capitalist economy along these lines served to accelerate scientific and technological progress. As pointed out earlier, the scientific and technological revolution accelerated the concentration and monopolisation of the capitalist economy. In this way it contributed towards the extension of the monopolies' economic domination and lent more weight to the influence of those wielding political power, a crucial precondition for the development of state-monopoly capitalism.

The reasons calling forth this development cannot, however, be confined to the production, technology and economy of capitalist society. The development of monopoly capitalism into SMC is the direct result of the new balance of class forces in the world as a whole and in individual capitalist countries that had taken shape after the Second World War and of the rapid worsening of the general crisis of capitalism. The state-monopolistic trends emerged as early as the First World War and it was precisely on the experience of that period that Lenin had based his brilliant analysis of this particular process. At the beginning of the 30s, under the impact of those catastrophic upheavals that capitalism experienced during the Great Depression, these trends intensified again. Yet it was only in the late 40s and early 50s that the development of SMC proceeded without interruption, embracing all capitalist countries: its scale and impact on capitalism led to irrevocable qualitative changes in the basis and superstructure of capitalist society. These were accounted for by the new level of growth in the productive forces, the rise in their social character but in equal measure by the need of the ruling class for new, more effective means of

protecting its position and interests at a time when the power and influence of world socialism were growing apace and when there had been a major intensification of the revolutionary process.

The active intervention by the bourgeois state in the nation's economic and social life, which previously had only come about in emergencies, such as war or economic crises, was now becoming an integral part of the bourgeois state's activity of upholding the existing social order and an essential condition for the normal functioning of capitalist production. The main objectives of this intervention were to defend capitalism's position in the competition and struggle against socialism, to soften the impact of cyclical and structural crises, to stimulate scientific and technological progress, to create conditions favourable for capitalist accumulation, to "control" class relations in keeping with the interests of monopolies so as to avert any sudden deterioration of those relations, which could lead to revolutionary crises.

The essence of SMC lies in merging the forces of monopoly capital and the forces of the state into a single mechanism. In various capitalist countries this mechanism took shape in forms predetermined by the concrete situations which obtained in each of them in the post-war years (including the conditions of the economy, the correlation of class forces and other factors). There were also differences in the pace at which SMC developed in the various countries and regions of the capitalist world.

The two main trends in state-monopolistic socialisation were public enterprise and state regulation of the economy. In a number of West European countries—France, Italy, Britain, Austria—where the large-scale nationalisation of industry, transport services and finance and credit establishments had been carried out in response to pressure from the labour and democratic movements, the first of the above trends developed on a considerable scale. State property in these countries became one of the main factors making possible the state-monopolistic control of economic and social processes. In these countries, state enterprises account for 20-25 per cent of industrial production, a great part of banking assets and between 11-12 per cent of the work force (in Austria as much as 30 per cent).¹ The main branches of the economy which to one degree or another are controlled by the state include coal-mining, electric power, metallurgy, the railways, air transport, and in France, and to some extent in Britain, the automobile and aviation industries. The role of the state in branches producing industrial raw materials and power enabled it to exert its influence on the economic conditions

¹ *The Political Economy of Modern Monopoly Capitalism*, Vol. 1, pp. 353, 374, 375.

of enterprises in all other branches and make sure the latter correspond to the interests of the monopolies. On the other hand, the state, in its capacity as powerful monopolist and owner of enormous enterprises, played a leading role in streamlining methods of exploitation and ensuring "social peace".

In the United States, Japan, Canada and a number of small states in Western Europe state ownership of the means of production was not so widespread; in this respect West Germany occupied an intermediate position.

The post-war situation in Western Europe and Japan can be summed up as follows: the need to restore and rebuild the economy, increasing competition in the capitalist world market, mounting pressure from the labour movement. All these factors served to promote in many of these countries such forms of state-monopolistic control as programming of the economy. It was in France that SMC developed furthest along such lines. In the United States, this particular form of state-monopolistic control did not take root. It was no coincidence, of course, that it was precisely the monopolistic bourgeoisie in the countries where its position had been particularly undermined as a result of the war, which was compelled earlier to accept the need for a certain restriction of the market anarchy in order to restore and consolidate its own position. The advance of state-monopolistic programming provided an answer to the imperative demands of the new productive forces which were to be seen more and more obviously to be tearing down the framework of private-capitalist relations. At the same time this advance was dictated by the increasingly tense competition with socialism and was presented by the strategists of capitalism as a kind of alternative to socialist planning.

Despite all the national differences in the forms and techniques of state-monopolistic control, in the course of its development it would reveal a number of common features which determine first and foremost the nature of its impact on the economy and social relations of the capitalist system.

The most important of these features was the ubiquitously growing role of the state budgeting and taxation policy in the economy. The share of the state budget in the national income increased from 1/5-1/4 in the pre-war period to 1/3-2/5 in the 70s. This meant that the state now played a considerably more important role in the redistribution of the national income and provided wider opportunities for it to influence various aspects of the nation's economic and social life. This influence was effected through the whole range of tax and financial levers of state policy: grants, privileges, loans, etc. The state financed the reconstruction of a number of the old branches of production, created and developed new ones, brought into

existence by the scientific and technological revolution, such as the atomic and space industries. Using these levers, the state is able to influence the size and structure of investment by privately owned capitalist companies, the concentration of production and its technical modernisation.

Particularly great is the role of state policy in stimulating scientific and technological progress. In the main capitalist countries the state takes upon itself the financing of half or more of the expenditure on scientific research and development.¹

One of the major trends to be observed in state-monopolistic control directly affecting the position of the working class is the range of measures to meet the changed conditions of the reproduction of the work force and to develop a number of branches of the social infrastructure: social security, health care, education, housing, protection of the environment. The ruling circles were impelled to implement such measures both by the objective needs of production and by the pressure exerted by the class struggle of the working people, inspired by the social achievements of socialism. Despite the limited and incomplete nature of these measures embarked upon by SMC and the fact that they only went a small way towards satisfying the needs of society, they nevertheless represent one of the important manifestations of the turning-point in the correlation of class forces ushered in by the further worsening of the general crisis of capitalism.

SMC did not, of course, change the actual nature of the capitalist social order, nor did it lead to the fading away of its basic principles and underlying laws of development. The aims of production remained unchanged: increased monopolistic profit and greater economic power for monopoly capital. Nor were there any fundamental changes in such essential features of capitalism as competition and the anarchic, uncontrolled nature of economic development. SMC could not hold back catastrophic recessions in production, including one of the most far-reaching in modern times—that of the mid-70s. State control and the “regulation” of economic life effected by SMC can only be of limited use because of the narrow framework of market, private capitalist relations. Nevertheless, working within this framework state control brought about a number of substantial changes in the pace and working of the capitalist economy. Rates of economic growth rose considerably and right up until the crisis of the 70s they remained at a relatively high level. The average annual growth rate for industrial output in the capitalist world as a whole was 5.8 per cent in the period 1949-1973 as opposed to 3.9 per cent.

¹ *Mirovaya Ekonomika i Mezhdunarodniye Otnosheniya*, No. 6, 1979, p. 32.

over the period 1920-1937 and in some countries it reached an even higher level (Japan—15.2 per cent, West Germany—9.1 per cent, and Italy—7.8 per cent).¹ The equipment and methods constituting the technical and technological basis for production were modernised on a large scale and there was a rise in productivity as well. The development of the capitalist economy in the 50s and 60s served to soften the impact of the socio-economic consequences of recessions in industry, and to reduce the scale of such phenomena as unemployment and the poverty of the working people. There was a marked increase in the size of personal consumption, and also in the real wages of a number of categories of employees.

Equally significant changes have taken place in the socio-political sphere and in the methods used for securing class domination. A typical feature of the development of society's political superstructure in conditions of SMC is the existence of closer ties between the monopolies and the bourgeois state and the party-political apparatus and their growing influence on all spheres of social and political life. These ties and this influence also existed at earlier stages of the development of monopoly capitalism, but now they are far more common and organised and possess far more ramifications: they permeate the whole system of administration of capitalist society. On the other hand, there has been enormous growth in the state bureaucratic apparatus and its functions have been significantly extended. Although the class essence of the bourgeois state has not changed, its relative independence has grown. The combination of these two tendencies makes it possible for the ruling class to elaborate and implement a single, co-ordinated social policy that satisfies the strategic and long-term interests of monopoly capital.

It goes without saying that under SMC the contradictions between various groups and factions of the monopolistic bourgeoisie, or between any of these factions and the state still exist and are at times seriously exacerbated. Yet the state-monopolistic power structure makes it in general far easier than before to "regulate" such contradictions and overcome differences that may arise. The implementation of state-monopolistic policy in practice is facilitated by the coalescence of the top managers of the monopolies with the upper section of the state apparatus. The power of this ruling elite in bourgeois society rapidly grows as a result of the emasculation of bourgeois democracy intrinsic to SMC: the unprecedented strengthening of the executive power, the expansion of state bodies and centres for political decision-making, which are not subject to control by parliament or other elected institutions.

¹ *The Political Economy of Modern Monopoly Capitalism*, Vol. 2, p. 406.

The main orientation of SMC's social policy between the 50s and 80s was the endeavour to undermine the class struggle as much as possible, to secure social conditions optimal for capitalist exploitation, increasing profit for the monopolies and consolidating their power at the price of certain economic and social concessions to the working people. As was pointed out in the Central Committee Report to the 24th Congress of the CPSU: "The features of contemporary capitalism largely spring from the fact that it is trying to adapt itself to the new situation in the world. In the conditions of the confrontation with socialism, the ruling circles of the capitalist countries are afraid more than they have ever been of the class struggle developing into a massive revolutionary movement. Hence, the bourgeoisie's striving to use more camouflaged forms of exploitation and oppression of the working people, and its readiness now and again to agree to partial reforms in order to keep the masses under its ideological and political control as far as possible."¹

Typical of capitalist social policy for this period is the combination of the suppression of the working-class struggle with the bourgeois endeavour to achieve total ideological and psychological "integration" of working people into the state-monopolistic system. Increased centralisation and control in the administration of capitalist society made itself felt in all aspects of social life. The living conditions of working people, their material and non-material consumption, the social behaviour and activity of their organisations are being subjected to ever increasing regulation. Economic control is being supplemented more and more often by social control. The state intervenes in labour relations, in the mechanism used for distributing income, and in the fluctuations of the working people's living standards on an ever wider scale. Aims of this kind cannot be achieved by bans and repression alone: SMC attempts not only to stem social protest and the organised activity of the working class and other strata of society, but also to create firm guarantees for "social peace". Hence the social demagoguery inherent in SMC, the wide use of various pseudo-democratic forms and procedures for "accommodating" opposed class interests and methods for providing the illusion that the working-class organisations take part in political decisions. The relative flexibility and manoeuvrability in the social sphere inextricably bound up with the preservation of the democratic facade for the political edifice were the distinctive features of SMC between the 50s and the 80s that set it apart from those forms of capitalism that were born of fascism earlier.

The emergence of SMC had a profound and at the same time contradictory influence on the conditions in which the labour movement had to continue its struggle.

¹ 24th Congress of the CPSU. Documents, p. 20.

Bourgeois and reformist advocates of SMC seek to represent the socio-economic function of state power as being something above class, providing for the interests of the whole of society, including the working class. It was precisely on the basis of these ideas that there arose the bourgeois-reformist conception of the "welfare state", according to which the legislative and executive power through specially designed measures tone down the vices of private enterprise, modifying the social defects of the market economy, "optimising" the processes of the distribution and redistribution of the national income and holding in check problems of unemployment.

The actual development of capitalism in the second half of the 20th century has revealed for all to see the bankruptcy of such state-ments. Intervention by the state in relations between labour and capital not only does not change the nature of class domination and relations based on exploitation but renders such relations more complex. In all spheres of social relations between labour and capital the private-enterprise policy of exploitation is supplemented by and dovetailed with the policy of class oppression implemented by the whole state-monopolist complex. The working class is confronted by pressure directed against its interests by the long-term, co-ordinated social tactics and strategy of the state and the monopolies. Exploitation in production is thus supplemented more and more by exploitation from outside the sphere of production, by deliberate manipulation of the working people's consumer demands and the whole complex of their needs, by manipulation of ideas and attitudes on all fronts.

The complexity of interpreting the class essence of these phenomena by the working masses is bound up with the fact that the bourgeois state takes great pains in masking the true aims of its policies, trying to present its socio-economic activity as one which upholds the interests of the nation as a whole, on the one hand, and the struggle of the working people and their organisations against the state-monopolistic economic and social policies, on the other, as the selfish defence of group interests against the "national" interests. The true nature of relations based on exploitation is also concealed by the increasingly "faceless" nature of class domination: the working class is confronted not so much by individual capitalists, as by an anonymous system of state-monopolistic power and its intricately ramified administrative apparatus.

The development of state-monopoly capitalism has thus changed in many respects the conditions and tasks of the labour movement, creating for it new difficulties and problems. The closer links between state policy and concrete issues regarding the material and social position of the working people places more and more insistent demands on the labour movement that it should be engaged in ac-

tive struggle in the political arena against the whole course pursued by SMC and that it should put in opposition to that course a detailed programme for economic and social policy. Without such struggle it will become less and less possible to defend even the immediate, short-term interests of the working people bound up with their standard of living, the right to work and to have proper working conditions and channels for collective bargaining in the sphere of labour relations. This struggle is becoming an issue of crucial importance, since without it the labour movement will not be in a position to thwart the attempts of ruling circles to deprive it of all independence and to turn the working class via "social integration" into a kind of driving belt for the power machine of the monopolies.

The changed situation has created not only difficulties but also new preconditions for a higher level of proletarian class struggle and it altered to a considerable extent the link between its short-term and long-term goals, between the defence of the working people's immediate interests, on the one hand, and the implementation of fundamental social change and the fight for socialism, on the other. These preconditions took shape as a result of the political struggle of the working class, inevitable under SMC. The exacerbation of contradictions of capitalism stemming from SMC served in enormous measure to extend that struggle.

When state-monopolistic trends started to develop, Lenin pointed out with astuteness kin to genius that "state-monopoly capitalism is a complete *material* preparation for socialism, the *threshold* of socialism, a rung on the ladder of history between which and the rung called socialism *there are no intermediate rungs*".¹

In conditions of well-established SMC in the second half of the 20th century the material preparation for socialism is of a still more advanced and complete nature. In its main features the mechanism for the social management of the economy has already been forged and the need for this has been duly appreciated by broad sectors of the working people. However, the social character of this mechanism created by SMC is in blatant contradiction with the goals and results of its activity. On the one hand, despite increased flexibility and manoeuvrability of the social tactics employed by the capitalists, we find exploitation of the working people, social inequality and unemployment and the failure to satisfy the most urgent needs of the popular masses to be the constant features of the capitalist society. On the other hand, despite the increasingly powerful regulation of socio-economic development SMC has not yet succeeded in developing it as a well-ordered, consistently planned system,

¹ V. I. Lenin. *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, 1980, p. 363.

or in overcoming the disrupting effect of the anarchic forces of the capitalist market. This development has retained its cyclical character and still goes hand in hand with inflation and unemployment and tensions stemming from problems connected with the energy, raw materials and currency crisis, the disruption of the mechanism of state-monopolist control, and in the mid-70s this development saw one of the most serious economic crises in the whole post-war period. Phenomena of this kind serve to spotlight the degree to which state-monopolistic socialisation is subordinated to the anti-social, selfish interests and goals of private-monopoly capital and to the laws of capitalism.

The anti-social, inhumane nature of the state-monopoly system came particularly clearly to the fore in the militarisation of the economy in a number of the main capitalist countries, in the role that has come to be assumed in their economic and social life by the activity of the military-industrial complex. In 1978, the annual level of military expenditure by the states, members of NATO, had reached a level that was more than ten times higher than the equivalent figure for 1949; in these countries half if not more of the total expenditure on research is geared to military requirements.¹ All this at a time when there is a growing need for funds essential to resolve urgent social problems! The monopolies of the military-industrial complex and their agents in the bourgeois parties and the state apparatus obstruct in every way possible the development of realistic trends in the foreign policy of the capitalist states, trying to create a situation fraught with the threat of thermonuclear war.

The striking disparity between the social character of the power mechanism created by SMC and its actual utilisation in the interests of the top monopolies, that directly oppose society, represents a new form of the contradiction between the productive forces and the production relations of capitalism. As a result of this the class contradictions also acquire new features. The main antagonism between labour and capital stands out more and more in relief in the sphere of state policy and state power, state goals and priorities which shape the system for the management of society and the economy. The contradiction between the working class and the bourgeoisie is becoming more and more closely linked with the growing contradiction between the monopolies and the overwhelming majority of society. There is growing dissatisfaction among the broad popular masses with the gulf, of which they are constantly aware, between the new opportunities now available for improving their material and cultural life, stemming from the social regulation of

¹ *The Political Economy of Modern Monopoly Capitalism*, Vol. 2, p. 22; *Mirovaya Ekonomika i Mezhdunarodniye Otnosheniya*, No. 5, 1979, p. 59.

economic and social processes, and the way in which that regulation is in fact subordinated to the interests of the monopolistic oligarchy.

Yet these new opportunities do not mean that the fight of the working class has become simpler or easier: if these opportunities are to be properly used, new decisions and a new level of organisation, political awareness, and militant activity are necessary on the part of the working class in the changed conditions.

Chapter 4

THE SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE WORKING CLASS

THE WORKING CLASS AND ITS ROLE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF PRODUCTIVE FORCES

The important consequences of the scientific and technological revolution and the whole process of the capitalist economy's development under SMC were the involvement of ever more working people in the sphere of large-scale capitalist production and the major changes that took place in the social division of labour and the composition of the labour force. The impact of these changes on the working class cannot be understood without reference to production relations and the main economic laws of that society in which the scientific and technological revolution is unfolding and to the class structure that is intrinsic to it.

Yet no reference is made to these factors by bourgeois economists and sociologists when they study the socio-economic effects of the scientific and technological revolution. In their writings they discuss the concept of the working class in isolation from the production relations of capitalism and apply to it not social or class-based criteria but criteria relating exclusively to the vocations and trades exercised: the composition of the working class is limited to the traditional categories of physical labour.

In terms of the scientific, Marxist-Leninist interpretation of the class structure of society, the differences between classes should not be determined by the professions or trades to which men belong. Lenin wrote on this subject: "Classes are large groups of people differing from each other by the place they occupy in a historically determined system of social production, by their relation (in most cases fixed and formulated in law) to the means of production, by their role in the social organisation of labour, and, consequently, by the dimensions of the share of social wealth of which they dispose and the modes of acquiring it. Classes are groups of people one of which can appropriate the labour of another owing to the different places they occupy in a definite system of social economy."¹

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, 1977, p. 421.

The working class under capitalism is a class of hired workers deprived of means of production, occupying a dependent, subordinate position in the social organisation of labour and exploited by capitalists who appropriate the surplus-value produced. The effect of changes in the structure of the work force and in the social division of labour on the working class should, therefore, be viewed in conjunction with the development of economic relations underlying the class structure of capitalism, the relations of capitalist exploitation.

The relations of hired labour constitute the essential precondition of capitalist exploitation. Under the impact of the scientific and technological revolution the number and proportion of small-scale property owners in the economy declines and there is an absolute and also relative increase in the numbers of hired workers (see Table 1).

Table 1

**Hired Workers*: Their Numbers and Share
in the Economically Active Population****

	USA		Britain		France		FRG		Italy		Japan	
	mln	%	mln	%	mln	%	mln	%	mln	%	mln	%
1950	48.4	81.9	21.1	92.2	12.5***	65.4***	15.6	70.8	12.7****	61.3****	14.6	40.3
1960	59.6	87.4	22.7	92.7	13.8*****	72.0*****	19.8	77.4	13.6	63.6	23.8	54.1
1970	74.6	90.2	23.4	92.8	16.5	78.5	22.4	82.9	13.6	69.5	34.3	64.9
1980	93.9	91.3	24.2	92.8	19.2	84.1	22.9	86.5	16.5	74.2	39.9	71.4

* Including the unemployed.

** Excluding military personnel.

*** 1954.

**** 1951.

***** 1962.

Sources: *Year Book of Labour Statistics*, 1951-52, 1960, 1961, 1962, 1964, 1971, 1980; *Annual Abstract of Statistics*, 1960, 1962, 1971, 1981.

As can be seen from the table, in the developed capitalist countries in which the process of industrialisation was for all intents and purposes complete by the beginning of the 50s, the share of hired workers constituted 85 per cent or more of the total numbers of the population actively employed in the economy by the end of the 70s. In countries like Japan and Italy, where there still existed a considerable sector of small-scale production at the beginning of the 50s (mainly in agriculture), the process of industrialisation was developing hand in hand with the processes of the scientific and technological revolution and with the particularly rapid rate of pro-

letarianisation. As a result the proportion of hired labour in Japan and Italy began quickly to catch up with that found in Britain, the United States, France and the Federal Republic of Germany.

Once the scientific and technological revolution had started, the growth in the share of the population engaged in hired labour proceeded far more quickly than before on account of the increase in the number and proportion of workers, in whose functions brain-work or non-physical labour predominated. Among the corresponding vocational categories of hired workers a process of social or class-based stratification takes place, and the majority of these become proletarianised to one degree or another, swelling the ranks of the working people exploited by the capitalists. This exploitation in its turn acquires certain new features that have also been shaped by the scientific and technological revolution.

On the basis of the scientific and technological revolution in the 50s and 60s there was a marked acceleration in the advance of the economy of the majority of the capitalist countries and the scale and rate of accumulation increased. The correlation of the various sources and methods of accumulation began to change during the period in question and was soon different from that found during the earlier stages of the development of capitalism. There was a decline in the relative importance of extensive methods based on the involvement of the growing number of workers in the sphere of capitalist exploitation (i.e. of the cheapest home labour for the capitalists) and also on the plundering of the peoples in the colonies and dependent countries. Accumulation in the industrially developed capitalist countries was effected primarily at the expense of domestic sources and the main factor facilitating the increase in its scale was scientific and technological progress and the consequent rise in the productivity and intensity of social labour.¹ One of the most important conditions for the advance of scientific and technological progress, therefore, became the improvement in the qualitative characteristics of the work force in connection with the profound changes, and sometimes virtually revolutionary ones,

¹ A. B. Veber, "The International Proletariat in the Imperialist System". In: *The Class Struggle and the Modern World*, Moscow, 1971, pp. 18-21. The author points out, among other things, that the absolute growth in the "tribute" levied by the imperialists from the economically dependent countries goes hand in hand with a relative decrease in the importance of revenue from external sources. In 1965, for example, the direct profits gleaned by the British monopolies from foreign investments came to 3.5 per cent of the national income as against 10 per cent in 1929, and in the United States the figures for the same years were 1 and 1.4 per cent respectively.

In the 70s, particularly in connection with the economic crisis and after that crisis, there was a marked increase in the trend to export capital so as to glean more profit rather than to invest within the home country. This led to a relative growth in the "tribute" for Britain.

in the content and functions of labour. The large degree of unevenness in the application of new technology in capitalist enterprises naturally creates a varied picture: in one and the same factory and sometimes in one and the same workshop, side by side with automated assembly lines and various types of the latest equipment there can be found other sections in which simple and heavy manual labour is used by demanding large outlays of physical strength. The main trend, however, is towards a rise in the complexity of labour and in the qualifications demanded of the work force.

In the 19th century the working class was engaged virtually exclusively in simple physical labour, and the vast mass of workers in that period only had a minimal, very short training that often did not require them to be literate. In the 19th and even in the first half of the 20th century, labour changed, broadly speaking, only in a one-sided way: technological innovations chiefly affected means of labour, while the actual process of labour was fragmented, being divided into simple, elementary operations, and this development culminated in the introduction of conveyor-belts in the 20s, which robbed the individual worker's activity of any creative elements it might have had. The majority of the work force in the inter-war years were semi-skilled. In the 60s, semi-skilled labour required for conveyor-belt production lines was still the lot of a considerable part of the working class, yet by this time the execution of many operations (including those for which semi-skilled workers were taken on) began to require a certain amount of knowledge and a certain degree of general education. For the time being, in the overwhelming majority of enterprises, unskilled and semi-skilled workers were relied upon to satisfy requirements and any links between the educational system and material production were extremely tenuous. There was a radical change in the situation, however, when further development in production proved impossible without the mass-scale utilisation of a highly qualified work force. The essential prerequisite for this new work force would, of course, be a significant extension of the provision for education.

Conveyor-belt labour did not correspond to the conditions obtaining in a number of the latest branches of production, occupying a dominant position in scientific and technological progress, such as the chemical and oil-processing industries. Yet there was a contradiction to be observed between conveyor-belt labour and the level of general education provided, or even the vocational training of the majority of young workers. Their training was, on the one hand, inadequate for many new jobs, but at the same time it was "redundant" for the majority of operations in conveyor-belt production. Although semi-skilled labour continued to be widely used in a number of branches of mass-scale assembly-line production, the intro-

duction of new technological processes in all branches of the economy held back the rates of growth in the number of semi-skilled workers employed.

In the industrially developed capitalist countries, a shortage of workers and administrative personnel with the high qualifications required in modern industry made itself felt, and indeed, this shortage still applies. Qualifications of this type are rooted in a reliable training in general subjects and in a number of instances presuppose a combination of physical labour and brain-work, while for workers in certain categories (for example, technicians, control-panel operators, computer operators, programmers and laboratory assistants, etc.) brain-work has come to predominate.

In some sections of production, particularly in the technically advanced branches, of growing importance is the labour of specific groups of the scientific and technical intelligentsia—engineers and scientific personnel carrying out routine work in design offices and laboratories or servicing technical complexes. Meanwhile categories of employees who are not engaged in management or administrative functions, as regards their place in the system of the social organisation of labour, are little more than ordinary workers.

This, of course, does not mean that all hired personnel engaged in brain-work are becoming part of the working class in the conditions of present-day capitalism. The trend towards the proletarianisation of the intelligentsia and white-collar workers does not tally with the trend towards the retention and continuation of social privileges for a considerable part of those groups: the position of many of them is determined by the objective functions of those organising capitalist exploitation or by the political and ideological servicing of existing social relations. Many strata of hired workers, while they carry out such functions, are at the same time subjected to capitalist exploitation and social oppression. All this points to the incomplete and uneven nature of the proletarianisation of a number of groups of brain-workers but it does not in any way refute the actual fact of the development of this process. While some groups of this type have virtually merged with the working class, others, more numerous ones, have grown closer to the working class as regards the essential features of their economic and social position.

The growth of the services sector's share in the national economy has also had a major impact on the increase in the workers' numbers. As a result of the development of capitalist relations and the concentration of capital in this sphere, hired workers have assumed leading importance in the provision of services. By the end of the 70s they accounted for over four-fifths of the employees in this sphere in the majority of the capitalist countries.

In this way the growth of the working class during the scientific and technological revolution goes hand in hand with increasingly heterogeneous labour functions and types of qualifications of the aggregate worker, and with the increasing complexity of the vocational and skills patterns to be observed within the proletariat.

Questions regarding the working class are of great importance in the ideological struggle between the adherents of Marxism-Leninism and their opponents.¹ Anti-communist ideologues, representatives of pro-bourgeois, reformist and revisionist trends, anxious to refute the Marxist-Leninist tenet on the world-historic role of the proletariat, maintain that the proletariat is allegedly drawing near to its inexorable demise under the impact of the scientific and technological revolution. On the other hand, revisionists of the Garaudy type have attempted to falsify the Marxist interpretation of the working class, maintaining that in present-day conditions any substantial differences between the proletariat and the whole mass of those engaged in brain-work are allegedly being erased. This thesis is being used to illustrate the anti-Marxist conception of the transition of the leading role in social development from the working class to the intelligentsia. The point of departure for all these theories is an over-simplified and distorted interpretation of the class—an historical, complex socio-economic category characterised by a whole range of criteria.

In accordance with the Marxist-Leninist conception of classes the composition and extent of the working class in capitalist society are determined by a whole group of characteristics which serve to define its place in capitalist relations of production. The majority of office workers, those employed in the retail trade and other low-level, sometimes medium-level, white-collar workers possess these characteristics, as well as industrial and agricultural proletarians, transport and building workers, and those employed in the services sector in modern conditions. According to the estimates of Soviet researchers, the share of the working class in the working population in the advanced capitalist countries fluctuated in the mid 70s between 61-68 per cent (Japan, Italy) and 77-80 per cent (USA, Britain).²

As Leonid Brezhnev pointed out in his speech to the 15th Trade Union Congress: "The ranks of the international working class, the most advanced revolutionary class of modern times, and its role as the main productive and socio-political force in the world, will continue to grow. Despite the fashionable anti-Marxist theories

¹ *Modern Capitalism and the Working Class: A Critique of Anti-Marxist Conceptions*, Moscow, 1976 (in Russian).

² *The Working Class in the Social Structure of the Industrially Developed Capitalist Countries*, Moscow, 1977, p. 311 (in Russian).

which allege that the scientific and technological revolution is narrowing the scope of the working class and even eliminating it altogether, the facts testify to the contrary: scientific and technological progress everywhere leads to the growth of the working class, due, among other things, to the new occupations introduced by the modern methods of production."¹

The working class of today consists of three detachments from different fields of production: the industrial proletariat, the agricultural proletariat and the proletariat in the services sector. The numbers of the agrarian proletariat have dropped several times over in the post-war period. In the working class of the main capitalist countries it only occupied a small place by the end of the 70s: between 1 and 2 per cent of the total working class in Japan, Britain, West Germany, the United States, and only in Italy did it account for 10 per cent. The main mass of the proletariat is divided more or less equally between the industrial branches of the economy and the services sector.

The industrial working class and the proletariat in the services sector are very different in their composition. Typical of the former are first and foremost those workers who make up approximately three-quarters of the total: a considerable section of the industrial working class is highly skilled and a large proportion of it is concentrated in large-scale enterprises. Among white-collar workers belonging to the industrial proletariat, a prominent place is that occupied by technical personnel.

Typical of the working class in the services sector are ordinary white-collar workers who constitute nearly two-thirds of its ranks. These are office workers employed in central and local establishments of the state apparatus, banking and insurance clerks, cashiers, clerks, nurses, laboratory assistants and other auxiliary personnel in the health service, and also teachers who have not had a university education, or who are employed in primary schools and pre-school establishments. Those employed in the various branches of the services sector—warehouse personnel, and various kinds of auxiliary staff in shops and catering establishments—are in general less qualified than those employed in industry (although in certain branches groups of highly skilled workers and technicians are employed). In the services sector the working class is less concentrated than in industry and it is more closely linked to the petty bourgeoisie and the new middle strata. There are considerably more women employed in the lower echelons of white-collar staff and workers in the services sector than in industry.

¹ L. I. Brezhnev, *Following Lenin's Course. Speeches and Articles (1972-1975)*. Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1975, p. 22.

As various groups of the population become proletarianised—a process that is taking place in all capitalist countries—and modern technology and industrial labour are being introduced, this enhances the importance of the working class as society's main productive force. Rising productivity and economic growth in the post-war period in the developed capitalist countries cannot possibly be regarded purely as a result of progress in science, technology and the organisation of management. One of the crucial conditions for technical and economic achievements was the high level of production skills possessed by the working class in those countries, their knowledge, their capacity for smoothly running, highly organised team work demanded by the increasingly complex technology of modern mechanised and automated production.

Increasing use of not merely the physical but also the intellectual and nervous energies of the worker in the labour process and the steadily rising intensity, essential for participation in modern technologically advanced production, constitute the essential elements of the contribution which the working class makes to technical and economic development.

Among the factors which make possible technological progress and economic development has been the growing importance not only of the labour activity of the working class but also of its struggle to uphold its interests. The intensification of the proletariat's class struggle drastically curtailed the opportunities for the monopolistic bourgeoisie to obtain larger profits at the expense of greater absolute surplus-value, in particular by retaining longer working hours and stepping up the pace for simple, unskilled labour and also by keeping wages at a low level. Growing opposition from the working class to such methods of capitalist accumulation obliged the bourgeoisie to stake everything on increasing relative surplus-value, raising social productivity, as demanded by accelerated technological progress, and also on introducing the latest scientific advances into production.

Changes in the balance of class forces throughout the world and within the capitalist countries obliged the monopolistic bourgeoisie and the bourgeois state to embark upon wide-scale social manoeuvring in addition to repression: to make certain economic concessions, particularly with regard to wages and welfare benefits, etc. This meant that the struggle of the working class contributed to the extension of the domestic market and, therefore, affected the rate and character of economic development.

The rise in the militancy of the mass labour movement, in the level of its awareness and organisation enabled the proletariat not only to affect the economy in indirect and spontaneous ways, changing through its struggle the conditions of capitalist reproduction,

but also directly and deliberately to influence the direction of economic development. This came to the foremost graphically in the struggle of the workers' organisations to implement economic goals and programmes which correspond to the interests of the working people as they should lead to some degree of improvement in their conditions. An example of this is the struggle of the Communist parties and trade unions in a number of capitalist countries to raise productive capital investments, to secure full employment, to develop economically backward regions, to increase consumer demand and to extend social services. Many of the progressive detachments of the present-day working class in the capitalist countries combine a high degree of militancy in the struggle to support their class interests with a growing awareness of their responsibility for economic development, with a constructive approach to this development.

New features of the activity and skills of the working class and its role in social production have turned out to be in sharp contradiction with its position in the system of social relations in capitalist enterprises. After considerably raising its intellectual potential, its levels of general and technical education, introducing a higher degree of organisation into its work, mastering the latest achievements of scientific research in its direct labour experience, the working class has still remained an exploited class, totally excluded from the management of production and obliged to subordinate its activity to interests and objectives that are opposed to its own. This contradiction which characterises the evolution of the social position of the working class, inevitably strengthens its determination to achieve a definite position in the system of the management of productive forces and to restrict the monopoly power of the bourgeoisie in the economy and society.

The enhancement of the working class' leading role in economic and social progress is the main trend of its development in the conditions of the modern era.

THE INDUSTRIAL PROLETARIAT

The general trends of development to be observed in the working class had a direct influence on the workers engaged in industry, in building trades, in the transport network and in communications. Industrial workers form the nucleus of the working class and are the main buttress of the labour movement.

The industrial proletariat of today differs from the previous generations by a high level of concentration in large-scale enterprises. In the US manufacturing industry for example, in 1972 28.7 per cent of all workers and white-collar personnel were concentrated in enterprises employing more than 1,000 people (which constitut-

ed only 0.6 per cent of the total number of factories in the country).¹ In Japan 31.7 per cent (1977)² of the workers and white-collar personnel were employed in such factories, in West Germany 37.6 (1977),³ in Britain 29.0 per cent (1976),⁴ and in Italy 24.3 per cent (1971).⁵ In France 24.7 per cent of the total number of industrial workers and white-collar personnel employed in factories with more than nine workers were concentrated in factories employing over 1,000 people in 1972.⁶

Lenin in his day pointed out the particularly important role of large-scale enterprises, writing that "the large factories (and mills) contain not only the predominant part of the working class as regards numbers, but even more as regards influence, development, and fighting capacity."⁷ Conditions in the large-scale enterprise foster the cohesion of workers from different backgrounds—those of peasant origin, those from impoverished families of the petty bourgeoisie, from the hereditary proletariat, workers of different ages, sex, and trades—in a single production team opposed to the capitalists and the management. Their common destiny and subjugation to cruel production practices nurture feelings of proletarian solidarity and an awareness of the divergence of their interests and those of the capitalists. It is no coincidence that precisely in large-scale enterprises there are the most powerful trade union organisations of working people, their class solidarity comes most powerfully to the fore, their ability to oppose the powers that be and to win for themselves, and subsequently for all workers in the particular branch of industry, an advantageous position in the unrelenting struggle for improved material prosperity and improved social status.

Typical of the conditions in which the modern industrial proletariat is now working are the significantly more complex composition of the work force with all its different branches and trades and the appearance and rapid growth of new categories of jobs and branches of industry.

Shifts in the branches in industry proceeded mainly along the following lines. In the first place, over a long period the number of men engaged in the mining industries and in the extraction of raw materials in general was decreasing, while the number of those working in the processing industries was increasing. Secondly, within the manufacturing industry there was a rise in the propor-

¹ *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 1980, p. 801.

² *Nihon Tokai Nankan*, 1979, p. 62.

³ *Statistisches Jahrbuch für die BRD*, 1979, p. 171.

⁴ *Annual Abstract of Statistics*, 1980, p. 166.

⁵ *Annuario statistico italiano*, 1979, p. 169.

⁶ *Les Collections de l'INSEE*, serie "E", No. 43, 1976, p. 70.

⁷ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, 1976, p. 70.

tion of jobs going to those employed in quickly growing branches that were playing a pioneering role in scientific and technological progress, branches such as electronics, the chemical, instrument-making and aerospace industries. Thirdly, far-reaching, qualitative changes took place within the majority of branches of industry as a result of the appearance and development of new trades, with the change in the technical basis of production and with the output of new types of product. In all industrially developed capitalist countries in the 50s and 60s there was a rapid rise in the number of workers employed in such new branches as radioelectronics, the production of computer equipment, the polymer chemistry, instrument-making, etc.

In the 70s and particularly after 1973-1974, another trend was to be observed in the capitalist countries: a drop in the number of the employed workers in the manufacturing industry as a whole and in many other branches of industry which had seen growth previously. In the United States for example, the number of workers engaged in the aviation industry increased in the period 1950-1970 from 206,000 to 296,000 and by 1978 it had fallen to 275,000.¹ In the period 1970-1979, the number of those employed in the manufacturing industry dropped from 13,770,000 to 13,330,000, in the Federal Republic of Germany from 10,309,000 to 8,806,000, in Britain from 8,465,000 to 7,276,000, in France from 5,677,000 to 5,496,000 and in Italy from 5,868,000 to 5,425,000 (in 1978).²

Scientific and technological progress brought about considerable change in the levels of qualifications and skills found in the working class, and above all with regard to its industrial nucleus. The automation of production processes brought with it the transfer of a considerable number of production functions from men to machines. The main emphasis of work carried out by the working class now shifted from the direct execution of the production process to its technical maintenance and regulation: the elaboration of programmes and the management of technological processes. Hence the rapid increase in the proportion of technicians and certain categories of skilled workers in the work force. The increase in the volume of research work carried out and the consequent rapid structural changes in production (the appearance of new types of product and the advance of new branches) led to an absolute and relative increase in the number of employees engaged in scientific research, and in the elaboration of new designs and experimental testing. The

¹ *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 1958, pp. 210-211; 1976, pp. 369-370; 1980, p. 412.

² *Yearbook of Labour Statistics*, 1979, pp. 190, 192; 1980, pp. 177, 186, 187, 193.

trend towards the computerisation of production greatly increased the demand for staff engaged in the installation, repair and servicing of computing technology.

The changes that have taken place can to some extent be traced in the change in skill patterns. Data relating to the United States (see Table 2) point to a considerable absolute and relative growth by the beginning of the 70s in the number of mechanics and repair workers and also in the number of team-leaders and foremen. Major changes have also taken place within individual trades. There were far more mechanics and repair workers in the new spheres of technology: aviation, radio and television, in the production and

Table 2

Changes in Number of US Skilled Workers Employed in Specific Trades

	1950		1970		1978		1970 % of 1950 figure	1978 % of 1970 figure
	mln	%	mln	%	mln	%		
All skilled workers	7.70	100	10.16	100	12.39	100	132	122
Of these:								
Mechanics and repair workers	1.69	22.0	2.82	28.0	3.24	26.1	167	115
employed in:								
the motor industry	0.64	8.4	0.84	8.3	1.2	9.7	131	143
radio and TV repairs	0.07	1.0	0.13	1.3			186	
aviation industry	0.07	0.9	1.14	1.4	2.04	16.5	200	141
computer and office equipment repairs	0.02	0.2	0.18	1.8			900	
Electricians	0.30	4.0	0.44	4.3	0.5	4.0	147	114
Pipe-line installators	0.27	3.6	0.35	3.4	0.4	3.2	130	114
Skilled machine operators	0.54	7.0	0.39	3.8	0.6	4.8	72	154
Machine and machine-tool adjustors	0.15	1.9	0.30	2.9	0.5	4.0	200	167
Carpenters	0.92	11.7	0.83	8.2	1.3	10.5	90	157
Masons	0.16	2.1	0.20	1.9	0.2	1.6	125	100
Painters	0.39	5.1	0.38	3.7	0.5	4.0	97	132
Team-leaders and foremen	0.34	4.4	1.50	14.8	1.67	13.5	441	111

Sources: *Occupational Outlook*, Washington, 1957, p. 223; p. 1973, p. 367; 1980, p. 55; *Census of Population. Detailed Characteristics*, Washington, 1973, p. 721; *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 1980, pp. 417-418.

maintenance of computers. The automation of production called for an increase in the number of electricians and mechanics qualified to repair equipment.

Complex processes were at work within the group of skilled metal workers which included machine operators, adjustors, locksmiths, pattern-makers, markers, etc. The automation of production processes and also some forms of mechanisation and the replacement of metal processing relying on physical strength by punching and precision casting led to the partial supplanting of machine operators and to a curtailment of their share in the skilled work force. Yet this process did not affect the position of adjustors or machine-tuners, whose role became more important and whose ranks swelled as the electronically programmed machine tools and other technology used in industry became more complex.

In the building industry the number of painters and carpenters employed dropped as a result of mechanisation and the mass production of standardised parts.

Table 2 does not include all the categories of skilled workers and it does not reflect the change in the nature of many trades. Yet the data provided make it possible to identify certain basic trends in these structural changes. There was rapid growth in the trades linked with new technology and new branches of industry. At the same time a number of mass-scale trades were becoming obsolete and their workers were being pushed out of production.

The group "team-leaders and foremen" may at first glance appear an exception, which, being one of the "oldest" categories, revealed exceptionally rapid growth. In the period 1950-1970, their total number rose by 340 per cent and their share in the total number of skilled workers rose from 4 to 15 per cent. This can be explained both by the general increase in the number of workers and also by the increasingly complex nature of the functions carried out by team-leaders and foremen. As the technological level of production became more advanced, the functions involved in the disciplinary control of workers were ousted by technical inspection and quality control of output. This naturally had a direct bearing on the changes wrought in the level of foremen's skills. In many cases the lowest echelons of administrative personnel turned into technical specialists.

In the 70s, as can be seen from Table 2, the growth in numbers of this category of skilled workers started to slow down as a result of the overall reduction in rates of growth in the number of workers in the United States, and also of the widespread introduction of automated systems of quality control and changed methods for the organisation of labour. Changes in the numbers and representation in the overall work force of those workers employed in tra-

ditional trades being apart, scientific and technological progress also led to intensive development of new trades.

As production became more complex and electronic equipment came to be used on a wider scale, many basic production functions (control of units, inspection, assembly, adjustment, repairs) began to require the skills of middle-ranking technical personnel, and sometimes even higher ones. New trades appeared, such as operator of an automated unit, maintenance worker for electronic apparatus, assembly technician, repair technician, etc. For the assembly of important sections in automated systems wide use was being made not only of technicians' labour but also of engineers' labour, and in some types of production engineers have taken upon themselves such tasks as operating control-panels, repair-work and adjusting.

It is thus clear that the scientific and technological revolution went hand in hand with the increased differentiation in the functions of engineers and technicians. Many engineers continued to carry out the functions of management and organisation, while others, constituting a minority, and the majority of technicians were drawn into the production process as run-of-the-mill participants.

As a rule, the majority of the new trades are assigned by official statistics to the category of white-collar workers, or specialists as distinct from that of blue-collar workers to which belong people in traditional trades, engaged for the most part in physical labour. Yet in the wake of the scientific and technological revolution the traditional dividing line between those engaged mainly in physical work and those engaged in brain work was obviously transformed. The level of "intelligence" associated with a particular trade or job began to be determined not by whether it involved work at a desk or at a machine, but by the level of education essential for it and the creative elements it involved. A certain group of office workers, for example, engaged in monotonous operations for processing official papers and documents carried out work demanding far less skill than that carried out by many workers. A number of trades in the category "physical labour" lost the basic characteristic that used to be associated with that kind of work—they no longer involved muscle power. Muscular effort no longer came into play at all in the work of a control-panel operator in charge of an automated production unit. Meanwhile there was a rapid rise in the importance of such qualities as speed of reactions, the ability to make decisions quickly, technical knowledge, etc.

The need for middle-ranking technical personnel in the wake of scientific and technological progress increased rapidly. This was linked both with the improved technical level of production and also with the broadening scale of research work and experimental testing and designing.

The total number of technicians in the United States (most of these in industry) increased from 815,000 in 1960 to 1,250,000 in 1970.¹ In France this category of personnel increased from 344,000 in 1962 to 759,000 in 1975, i.e. it more than doubled in 13 years.² In Britain in 1961, according to figures published by the Ministry of Labour, there were 365,000 industrial technicians and in the ten years that followed their number increased by two-thirds³ (the number of draughtsmen and laboratory assistants over the 50 years—1921-1971—increased seven times over⁴). A large proportion of technicians do not carry out any administrative functions and as far as their place in production, their role in the organisation of labour, and the level of their wages are concerned they belong to the industrial proletariat, to its most skilled stratum.

If we take into account those employed in new trades and professions, then the total number of the industrial proletariat in the United States rose from twenty-five million to 31 or 32 million during the period 1950-1970.⁵

An analysis of the class structure of scientific and technical personnel in the Federal Republic of Germany, made by the Institute for Marxist Research in Frankfurt on the Main brought to light a trend for the rapprochement between scientific and technical personnel, on the one hand, and skilled workers, on the other, and the fact that a considerable section of the scientific and technical per-

¹ *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 1973, pp. 235-238.

² *Economie et statistique*, No. 91, 1977, pp. 4-5.

³ *Occupational Changes. 1951-1961*, London, 1967, p. 11.

⁴ G. Routh, *Occupation and Pay in Great Britain, 1906-1979*, London, 1980, p. 17.

⁵ These calculations are based on the data taken from *Census of Population. Detailed Characteristics*. Insofar as official statistics regarding the various trades and professions plied by the work force in the capitalist countries do not provide an adequate basis for assessing its class composition, the data provided here are inevitably of an approximate nature. The difference between these calculations and those published earlier (see for example: *The Working Class in the Social Structure of the Industrially Developed Capitalist Countries*, p. 314) can evidently be explained by the fact that the divisions between the various detachments of the proletariat in this volume are based on differences between spheres of application (industry, services sector, etc.) and not on types of work. Using methods evolved by the Institute of World Economy and International Relations, USSR Academy of Sciences, the term "industrial proletariat" is used to include not only hired workers engaged mainly in physical labour and employed in industry, building, the transport network and communications and the unemployed formerly participating in such work, but also representatives of new industrial trades which, in their essential characteristics, can be classified as belonging to the working class (technicians, draughtsmen, repair and maintenance workers specialising in computer technology) and also some of the white-collar workers employed in industry, construction projects, transport and communications.

sonnel—the lowest two of the five categories into which this part of the work force is divided, and the third in part, amounting to a total of between 1,000,000 and 1,400,000—can be viewed as part of the working class in the light of its main class characteristics.¹ If we take into account that part of these new detachments of the work force in industry, then the overall total for the industrial proletariat in the Federal Republic came to between 12 and 13 million in the mid-70s.²

Under capitalism, the processes of change in the workers' skills are of a complex, contradictory nature.

In comparison with old all-purpose machine-tools the specialised equipment in the modern factory demands less mental skill of the worker but more precision in his work. The overall technological level of production becomes more advanced and mass production based on the principle of interchangeability of parts demands a high level of precision in the processing of details. For this reason certain categories of semi-skilled workers working with specialised machine-tools in a modern enterprise possess higher skills than skilled workers in a workshop of a semi-artisan type.

Automation represents a qualitatively new stage in the development of industrial technology. The principal difference between automation and various forms of mechanisation is the existence of the feedback circuit, which takes on the function of the immediate control of the work process. In conditions of complete, or comprehensive automation man no longer directly participates in the actual work process. His functions are confined first to the elaboration of programmes and technological modes of operation for the automated production units, secondly to general inspection and control of their functioning, and thirdly to the regulation, adjustment and repair of automated units. In branches of industry where the process of all-embracing automation of production is underway, skilled workers are coming to constitute an increasing share of the work force, while the proportion of unskilled workers is on the decline. In certain enterprises with a high degree of automation skilled workers constitute an absolute majority of the workers.

However, in addition to enterprises with comprehensive automation which is only used in branches of industry with a continuous production cycle, in the chemical, oil-processing, metallurgical and food industries and power plants there exist other partial or incomplete forms of automation, when only certain operations within a

¹ *Klassen und Sozialstruktur der BRD. 1950-1970*, Part II, Frankfurt on the Main, 1973, pp. 240-260.

² Calculations are based on *Statistisches Jahrbuch für die BRD, 1979*. Compare: *The Working Class in the Social Structure of the Industrially Developed Capitalist Countries*, p. 314 and Note 5 on page 174 of this volume.

production cycle are automated, not the whole cycle. The rapid development of automation since the mid-50s in the industrially developed capitalist countries has been in the field of partial or incomplete automation. While elements of automation such as automated series of machine tools and automated electronically programmed machine tools are widely used in production, comprehensive automation is still at an early stage of its development.

Various forms of automation influence the skills patterns in the work force in different ways. While complete automation makes it possible to exclude man from the production process, partial forms of automation mean that there are still a number of operations demanding the direct involvement of the worker in the production process. Capitalist rationalisation of the organisation of labour is aimed at making these operations as elementary and easily accessible to workers as possible, so that only short-term minimal training is required. It was precisely these processes that attracted so much attention in the United States in the 50s and led American researchers investigating conditions in industry to come to the conclusion that automation leads to a drop in the level of workers' skills.¹ The introduction of partial forms of automation enables factory owners to replace on a large scale skilled machine-tool operators with machine operators given only a minimum of training and taken on as semi-skilled workers. This development is most conspicuous with regard to workers engaged in loading automatic production lines and then unloading the finished product.

Automation as it is introduced on an increasingly wide scale dispenses with the need to divide the labour process into elementary operations, which means that each worker is used to be responsible only for a very small part of the process. When comprehensive automation is introduced, then the worker with a single trade or skill, or the narrow specialist, will be replaced by a worker with several skills, a versatile specialist, who can turn his hand to a wide range of operations and who possesses technical expertise.

The broadening range of skills required of the individual worker paves the way for the combination of a number of special skills, which may be demanded, say, of the operator or maintenance worker in automated systems in the oil-processing industry. These processes are to be observed in other branches of industry as well: in mechanical engineering we now find skilled machine operators who themselves adjust and repair their machine-tools. The growing speed and extent of changes in technological processes and the continuous introduction of new technology have led to the appearance of many skilled workers who are able to master new technol-

¹ *New Views on Automation*, New York, 1961, pp. 54, 60-61.

ogy as they go along, to take part in improving it. This broadening of the individual worker's range of skills is also necessary if production is to be quickly reorientated so as to be able to cope with new advanced types of output. All these developments enhance the importance of the "all-rounder", who is coming to occupy a key role in many branches of industry and in other branches of the economy as well.

A significant feature of the new type of skills required is their flexibility. When production is evolving rapidly it is essential that there should be a constant extension of specialised knowledge. For this reason for many categories of skilled workers constant studies and refresher courses have become an essential condition of their work in a specialised area. Each time they lag behind it means their skills start to become obsolete. According to American statistics, on average a worker's skill becomes totally obsolete over a period of ten years. In the most dynamic branches of industry in the forefront of technological progress, such as the aerospace industry or production of computers, this period is significantly shorter.

The fact that skills become more and more adaptable exerts a considerable influence upon the whole system of the organisation of production. The need has arisen to set up an on-the-spot training system for workers that would function all the time and would not take the workers away from their job. Retraining for workers has become, in this age of the scientific and technological revolution, one of the most important ingredients for the organisation of the production process.

All these features of the new type of skill can be realised only if there is a basis to build on, namely a fairly good grounding in general subjects that young workers are given in school. The standard of general training, essential for mastering many industrial skills, is roughly that reached by secondary education. Earlier vocational training was based mainly on the acquisition of practical skills and could proceed separately from general education, but now general education has become the essential basis for vocational training, an integral part of the latter. Without it, it is impossible for the young worker to acquire a broad range of skills and to improve his level.

In Japan, the proportion of industrial workers who completed part or all their secondary education (9-12 years' schooling) has more than doubled: from 15.3 per cent in 1950 to 34.9 per cent in 1971.¹ According to 1977 figures, 36.49 per cent of workers com-

¹ *Modern Capitalism and the Working Class: A Critique of Anti-Marxist Conceptions*, p. 60.

pleted their secondary education; 4.69 per cent of workers graduated from college or university.¹

In the Federal Republic of Germany, over 90 per cent of industrial workers had completed in 1977 their secondary education, either general or vocational (nine years in school plus two or three years training in industry). At the beginning of the 60s the equivalent figure was less than half. Meanwhile the share of workers with a higher or secondary technical education had risen from 1 per cent in 1961 to 2 per cent in 1977.²

There was a marked rise in the level of education among American workers in the 50s. The share of urban workers who had not completed their (12-year) secondary education was 75.4 per cent in 1962, 60.6 per cent in 1970, and a mere 38.9 per cent in 1979. During the 70s the proportion of workers who had studied for a year or more at college doubled, reaching the level of 15.7 per cent.³

The considerable rise in the educational level of the industrial core of the proletariat stems from the active, creative role which the working class plays in the development of scientific and technological progress. The rise in the level of workers' skills is one of the major trends in the age of the scientific and technological revolution. But the production relations of capitalism hold back considerably this objective trend. The appearance of new jobs demanding a better qualified work force does not mean that the skills of those already employed automatically rise. Some workers are retrained, and others, in particular older workers are made redundant or moved over to less qualified jobs. Young workers with higher levels of training take their place. This gives rise to chronic unemployment. Market fluctuations hardly affect the unemployed, since they can never return to their old jobs as these no longer exist.

Moreover, in addition to the new technology which demands workers with a new level of skills, there is a variety of forms of mechanisation and partial automation. The use of the latter leads to the parcelling of labour and to the contraction of the professional skills of a considerable section of workers. According to figures drawn from surveys in eight branches of West Germany industry, 29.1 per cent of workers discharged monotonous partial functions; 15.7 per cent of the workers operated machine tools and machines;

¹ *Nihon Tokai Nankan*, 1978, p. 54.

² Calculated from: *Wirtschaft und Statistik*, Herausgeber: Statistisches Bundesamt Wiesbaden, 1979, No. 12, p. 875; *Bildungsbericht ... '70. Bericht der Bundesregierung zur Bildungspolitik*, Bonn, 1970, p. 60; *Bildungspolitische Zwischenbilanz*, Bonn, 1976, p. 53.

³ Calculated from: *Monthly Labour Review*, Vol. 94, No. 11, 1971, p. 34; 1980, Vol. 103, No. 7, p. 45 (the 1962 figures included workers aged 18 and over and the 1970 and 1979 figures included workers aged 25 and over).

11.4 per cent were engaged in technical maintenance work; 10.9 per cent regulated instruments; 5.1 per cent supervised the work of automated machinery, and finally 10 per cent of the workers serviced automated units which demanded high-level skills.

Table 3

Changes in the Skills Structure of the Working Class
(industrial workers engaged in physical work — in percentages)

Country and year	Total no. of workers	Skilled workers, including foremen	Semi-skilled workers	Unskilled workers
USA				
1950	100	32.9	52.0	15.1
1970	100	36.6	50.0	13.4
1979	100	40.1	46.2	13.7
Britain				
1961	100	54.2	30.3	15.5
1971	100	54.2	29.1	16.7
France				
1954	100*	51.6	28.0	17.3
1968	100*	41.3	34.7	20.7
1975	100*	43.1	35.9	19.6
FRG				
1951	100	47.6	28.0	24.4
1969	100	42.8	36.9	20.2
1974**	100	43.9	36.4	19.7
Italy				
1951	100	49.0	24.1	26.9
1971	100	56.0	25.5	17.5

* Including apprentice workers (1 to 3 per cent, depending on the year).

** Figures calculated by the Institute of the International Labour Movement, USSR Academy of Sciences.¹

Sources: *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 1964, p. 228; 1973, p. 223; 1980, p. 403; *Department of Employment Gazette*, October 1975, p. 985; *Economie et statistique*, 1977, No. 91, pp. 4-5; *Marxistische Blätter*, September-Oktober 1972, p. 44; *Scienza e organizzazione del lavoro*, Turin, 1975, p. 25; *The Working Class in the Social Structure of the Industrially Developed Capitalist Countries*, p. 316.

Information as to the nature of the work carried out by the remaining 17.8 per cent was not available.¹

These contradictory processes are reflected to some extent in the more comprehensive statistics, provided in Table 3.

¹ Figures quoted in: *Klassen- und Sozialstruktur der BRD. 1950-1970*, Part 2, p. 184.

The division of workers for statistical purposes in the majority of advanced capitalist countries into three main categories: skilled, semi-skilled (known as "specialised" workers in France, and "trained workers" in the FRG and "operators" in the United States) and unskilled—is to a large extent out of date, although statistics using these categories can still provide some idea of changes in workers' skills.

As is clear from this table, the proportion of skilled workers was rising in the United States and Italy, yet was fluctuating in the FRG and France (in Britain it remained stable). These differences are partially linked with features of national statistics in the individual countries and also with the fact that specific stages of technical development in the industry of the United States and Western Europe did not always coincide in time. In the United States, the transition to assembly-line production began as early as the 20s and was completed during the Second World War. In the 50s the bulk of metal-cutting machine tools were specialised machines serviced by semi-skilled workers. The introduction of automation tended to oust semi-skilled machine-operators from industry and led to an increase in the proportion of technicians and maintenance workers drawn from the ranks of skilled workers.

In the FRG, France and a number of other West European countries the transition to assembly-line production was not complete until the late 50s and early 60s. It led to a replacing of many skilled workers by semi-skilled ones. Yet as the processes of automation became more advanced, the reverse trend began to predominate: the proportion of skilled workers in the total labour force was on the increase.

When assessing these changes in the skills patterns to be found in industry it is essential to draw a distinction between the impact of new technology, on the one hand, and the results of deliberate policies pursued by the monopolies with regard to rates of pay, on the other hand. Monopolistic associations go out of their way to use technological progress, so as to break down old pay scales and to lower the skill category of workers.

The uneven nature of technological progress in various branches of production and in factories of varying sizes meant that there was still a large-scale retention of relatively unskilled labour involving specialised operations. In an effort to economise on labour costs capitalist enterprises continued to use labour of this kind where market conditions made it possible, together with the condition of technical equipment and the level of the working people's organisation and militancy.

The broadening of the sphere in which highly skilled workers are employed and increasing expenditure on retraining workers took

place only in those branches of industry and in factories where such measures were responsible for growing profits and the continuing ability to keep abreast of competitors. The enhanced level of knowledge that workers had acquired as a result of better education was regarded in many quarters merely as a "reserve" that could be used if the need were to arise to modernise production techniques and technology. The level and content of the skills possessed by ever more workers thus turned out to be totally at variance with the real labour functions assigned to them.

All in all, the rise in the industrial proletariat's level of skills and education which proceed at a different rate in different countries and industries and in antagonistic forms, usually associated with capitalist relations of production, engenders class contradictions and prompts the working class to extend its demands in the course of its struggle. The new social make-up of the working class is more and more often at loggerheads with the system of exploitation and social oppression, which determines its position under capitalism.

FOREIGN WORKERS

In a number of countries the appearance of large armies of immigrant workers was to bring about considerable changes in the social composition of the working class. The exploitation of immigrant workers' labour in the industrially developed capitalist countries was not a new phenomenon. Lenin in his day had pointed out the advantages for the imperialist countries to be gained from limitless and shameless exploitation of "cheap" foreign workers: it is to their lot that the heaviest common labour always falls.¹

However, in the 60s and early 70s foreign labour was used on an unprecedented scale, particularly in the industrial countries of Western Europe which had become the main centres attracting immigrant workers. This phenomenon stemmed from the increasing unevenness of economic development in the capitalist world, when accelerated economic growth in the West European countries coincided with an inadequate supply of local labour up until the mid-60s. At the same time in the less developed countries, in particular those of Southern Europe there was a surplus of labour, and unemployment led the more active among the young and healthy to look for ways to earn their living abroad, in particular since the level of wages in the industrially developed countries was usually considerably higher. In 1970, the total number of foreign workers in the

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, 1972, p. 168.

seven main centres of immigration (West Germany, France, Switzerland, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxemburg and Sweden) came to around 8,700,000 and in 1975 had reached almost eleven million. In the 60s, the immigrant workers came for the most part without their families, but in the 70s dependents accounted for a larger share of the immigrant population.¹ Immigrants were deployed as follows: in France 38.2 per cent, in West Germany 37.3 per cent, in Switzerland 9.2 per cent, in the Netherlands 3.2 per cent, in Sweden 3.7 per cent, and in Luxemburg 0.8 per cent.² Large contingents of immigrant workers also set out to Britain, Austria, and the Scandinavian countries. All in all, including dependents and illegal immigrants, the total came to between 14 and 15 million, as opposed to 3,200,000 at the beginning of the 60s.

Moreover, among the immigrants in the nine countries of the EEC in the late 60s there was an absolute majority—as much as 80 per cent of the total—of foreign workers from countries that were not members of the Community and who, therefore, did not enjoy the many rights and advantages for immigrants from EEC countries (such as Italy, for example). Between 1962 and 1974, the biggest rise in numbers of immigrants was among those from the Mediterranean countries of Europe: in 1974, these accounted for 52 per cent of all immigrants in the EEC, while those from North Africa accounted for 8.5 per cent of the total. Meanwhile, the influx from Turkey rose from 16,000 to 720,000, that from Portugal went up from 3,000 to 487,000 and that from Greece from 73,000 to 282,000. Meanwhile the influx from Italy which had long been the main source of immigrant labour remained stable, around the million mark, while the proportion of Italians among all the foreign workers dropped during the same period from 33 to 14 per cent.³

Immigration of foreign workers into France and Britain was of a different kind: approximately a third of the foreign workers immigrating into France was from North Africa, while most of the immigrants coming to Britain were from former dominions and colonies, so-called coloured workers from countries such as India, Pakistan and the West Indies.

Immigrant labour was used on the widest scale of all in France, West Germany, Switzerland and Luxemburg. By the end of the 70s foreign workers had made up between 20 and 25 per cent of hired

¹ *L'offre et les migrations de main d'oeuvre en Europe. Dimensions démographiques (1950-1975) et perspectives.* Nations Unies, New York, 1980, p. 84.

² *U.N. Economic and Social Council, Trade/R 394*, April 3, 1980, p. 1.

³ *The International Trade Union Movement*, No. 5, 1976, pp. 30-31.

workers in Switzerland, 9 to 10 per cent in West Germany and 9 per cent in France.¹

In Western Europe, immigrant labour is used most of all for heavy unskilled work in the construction and extractive industries, in ferrous and non-ferrous metallurgy and in those branches of industry relying mainly on conveyor-belt labour with monotonous repetitive operations that do not demand special qualification, as, for example, in the motor industry, but also in such work as cleaning, street sweeping, etc. In France, the percentages of foreign workers in the construction and motor industries were 37.5 and 26 respectively: less than a third of immigrant workers possessed any qualification.²

The exploitation of foreign workers brings enormous profits to the capitalist entrepreneurs. According to estimates drawn up by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the EEC countries alone economise annually by exploiting cheap immigrant labour £21,000 million, i.e. approximately £3,000 per worker. One of the ways in which this economy is made is through the rotation system, i.e. through the fairly rapid replacement of one group of mainly unskilled workers by another, thus making it possible for the employers not to pay workers social insurance benefits, which require the recipient to have a fairly long work record before he becomes eligible for such payments: in West Germany and France, foreign workers were paid respectively on average 15 and 17.4 per cent less than local workers, and this was not always because of their low qualifications but also because qualifications obtained in the country of origin were not usually recognised elsewhere.³ A similar situation could be found in other West European countries.

Increasing employment problems and the rising unemployment after the late 60s, the economic crisis of 1974 to 1975 and the ensuing uneven and unfavourable development of the West European economy led to new legislation designed to limit immigration from countries outside the Community. The sharpest decline in recruitment of foreign workers was to be observed in France, West Germany and Switzerland. At the same time, various methods began to be used to "persuade" unemployed immigrants of the need to leave whichever West European country they happen to be living in. It is difficult to establish the exact number of foreign workers who left Western Europe. Rough estimates arrived at by the ILO and

¹ *Vorwärts*, July 14, 1979; *L'Humanité*, May 31, 1979.

² *The Financial Times*, August 1, 1977; *L'Offre et les migrations de main d'oeuvre...*, p. 172.

³ *IPW-Berichte*, No. 5, 1975, p. 36; *Problèmes économiques*, September 29, 1976, p. 15.

other official international and national bodies for the five years from 1973 to 1978 put the figure at between 1.5 and 2 million (and it was also established that over two million immigrants lost their jobs during the same period).¹

Between 1973 and 1978, close on 910,000 people left West Germany, for instance, yet there still remained at least two million and in France 1,600,000 immigrants.² These were above all people who had lived between five and ten years in West European countries and had been granted local citizenship. This means that more and more immigrant workers and their families in the industrially developed countries of Western Europe are becoming not a temporary but a permanent part of the population. Despite this, however, they are not being assimilated among the indigenous inhabitants: instead they are subjected to discrimination and obliged to live in conditions vastly inferior to those enjoyed by the indigenous population.

A number of bourgeois researchers, including some from OECD, are forced to acknowledge that sending immigrants home does not in any way lead to an increase in the number of jobs for the indigenous population. In some branches, such as the construction industry, the absence of foreign workers can even lead to a fall in production and still more dismissals in allied industries.³ Despite high levels of unemployment in the countries of Western Europe there are still a few heavy jobs with a low social status which the local inhabitants are not prepared to contemplate.

Although under the 1968 resolution passed by the EEC countries, an end was put to discrimination relating to conditions of employment, wages and working conditions for immigrants from the EEC countries, for immigrants coming from outside the EEC, i.e., for by far the largest category, many types of discrimination still exist. Indeed, it needs to be pointed out that to a certain extent it exists in practice for the "privileged" immigrants from the EEC as well. Admittedly these categories of foreign workers were given the right to join trade unions and be elected to executive positions, in trade unions and to representative bodies, and also the right to use the same social privileges as local workers, to receive vocational training and retraining. Yet in the vast majority of cases a whole range of factors—economic, socio-psychological, and linguistic, in addition to very low levels of general education and vocational training—continues to determine their far from equal position in society and prevent them from obtaining more skilled work. The rapid turnover

¹ *International Labour Review*, No. 4, 1979, p. 401.

² *International Labour Review*, No. 4, 1979, p. 402; *La Suisse*, April 10, 1980.

³ *Le Monde*, April 19, 1979.

in enterprises employing large numbers of immigrant workers stemming to a large extent from the endeavours on the part of the monopolies and governments to maintain rotation and to keep down social spending, all make it impossible for them to receive many supplementary payments and social benefits.

The continued presence of several million foreign workers and their families in West European countries gave rise to the acute problem as to how to cope with the "second-generation" immigrants. In 1974, in the countries of Western Europe, the total number of immigrant workers' children reached four million.¹ The capitalist society was incapable of helping the children of these immigrant workers to overcome the language barrier in order to study in ordinary and vocational schools in the host country. The customary isolation of immigrant workers from the social and cultural life of the host country, the concentration of these workers in virtual ghettos in the big cities encourage the older generation to preserve their national customs and way of life, and to refuse to integrate with the population of the host country. Very many of these immigrant workers' children do not attend school at all. In a special UN report in 1974 it was pointed out that in Western Europe almost 300,000 immigrants' children are not given any general education at all; from the two million children attending school, as they are obliged to by law, very few progress beyond the primary stage. In France, close on 20 per cent of these children (particularly, those from North African families) do not even learn to read, 60 per cent experience major learning difficulties and only 20 per cent are able to complete their secondary schooling. In West Germany, where particularly large numbers of Turks are employed, 60 per cent of immigrant workers' children receive no secondary education certificate. In other words, they are virtually deprived of the chance to obtain any kind of skilled work in the future.²

In general, only a negligible proportion of immigrant workers' children in West Germany and France can study in various vocational courses; in France, where such courses were set up in order to implement the National Pact for Employment (1977), only six per cent of those attending such courses were from immigrants' families and another four per cent of the young people attending courses combined with apprenticeships in factories.³ In Switzerland (where Italian workers form the main contingent of the immigrant population), 20 per cent of "second generation" immigrants were able to obtain training as apprentices, as opposed to 60 per cent of young people from the indigenous population.

¹ *International Labour Review*, No. 6, 1979, p. 764.

² *Ibid.*, p. 765.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 765-766.

As a result of this state of affairs a "second generation" of immigrant workers are growing up within Western Europe, who from the earliest childhood have been subject to the most serious discrimination as regards opportunities for obtaining general education or vocational training. This means that members of the new generation, like the previous one, are condemned to heavy, unskilled and low-paid work, to unemployment, to low living and cultural standards.

In the USA, the phenomenon of immigrant workers as such, does not officially exist. In this case reference can only be made to the actual working and living conditions which immigrant workers have to tolerate and to the way in which their situation abruptly deteriorated in the 70s as a result of the economic recession, growing inflation and unemployment. Yet immigrants who enter the United States legally (numbers are restricted to 400,000 a year¹) only constitute the tip of the iceberg. More intricate and complicated is the question of the "illegal aliens", who despite all the bans and barriers continue to flood into the USA in numbers far greater than those of the legal immigrants.

No precise information is available about the number of "illegal aliens" at present living on US soil. Experts from the Census Bureau put the figure at between 3.5 and 5 million, while those from the Immigration and Naturalisation Service maintain that there must be between 6 and 12 million.² More precise information is available with regard to those who enter the country without permission every year. Their number comes to 800,000 or 900,000 and 60 per cent of them are Mexicans.³ Their status outside the law condemns them to the dirtiest, most unskilled work that is low paid and often dangerous. Safety regulations and legislation on minimum rates of pay and collective bargaining offer them no protection. It is precisely the availability of illegal aliens' labour that has brought into being again clandestine sweat-shops like those in which immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe were exploited at the beginning of the century. Investigation of some of these sweat-shops revealed that those working in them in 1979 were underpaid by \$162,500,000, if their rates of pay were compared with the then minimum wage.⁴

American labour unions until recently either ignored the "illegal aliens" or, fearing competition on the labour market, campaigned for stricter legislation against them. Yet in the last few years some unions have fundamentally reviewed their position and begun to

¹ *US News and World Report*, January 29, 1979, p. 38.

² *New York Times*, July 8, 1980.

³ *US News and World Report*, January 29, 1979, p. 38.

⁴ *Ibid.*, January 14, 1980, p. 73.

encourage "illegal aliens" to join their ranks. A particularly effective campaign is that waged by the United Farmworkers Union, active mainly in the "sun belt" of the South and South West, i.e. in those states where the influx of such immigrants is particularly great.¹

All in all, the emigration of millions of workers to countries other than their own gives rise to a host of complex social and political problems, and confronts the organisations of the working class with various, sometimes difficult tasks.

THE AGRICULTURAL PROLETARIAT

The scientific and technological revolution and changes in the capitalist economy have had a major impact on the agricultural proletariat.

Agriculture is the only major branch of production in which hired workers constitute the minority of the active population. In its composition the agricultural proletariat is not homogeneous. Apart from differences in levels of skills and education and wages there are differences with regard to length of employment, forms of payment and property status (some of the farmers are have-nots, while others possess small land holdings).

In forms of employment agricultural workers are usually divided into two categories: those hired on a permanent basis, and those hired on a temporary basis. These categories are, however, interpreted differently in various countries. In some countries, regular workers are those who are employed throughout the year; in others the term implies those workers who have contracts extending over a sizable period, at least six months. The notion of temporary workers is even more vague. In some cases it merely means seasonal workers, while in others it implies both seasonal workers and those hired by the day. National statistics in one and the same country often provide quite different figures with regard to numbers of regular and casual agricultural workers. The dividing line between regular and seasonal workers, just as that between seasonal workers and those hired by the day is vague in the extreme.

In US agriculture, for instance, close on 1,300,000 hired workers were employed in 1976.² However, by no means all of these could be regarded as agricultural labourers in terms of their main duties. Among them there were a good number of persons who could not be regarded at all as part of the country's active population: for the most part they were students and housewives anxious to add to

¹ *Wall Street Journal*, November 13, 1979.

² *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 1977, p. 399.

their income by working in agriculture. In almost all countries wide use is made of young people and children for temporary work. In the United States, in 1970 42 per cent of day labourers and 33 per cent of seasonal workers were aged between 14 and 17.¹ Cases of children aged between 10 and 13 are not common either.

The scientific and technological revolution which led to a particularly rapid rise in labour productivity in the sphere of agriculture caused an abrupt drop in the number of farm workers. Moreover, in the United States (and in a number of other advanced capitalist countries) the number of farm workers employed on a permanent basis is decreasing more rapidly. Between 1949 and 1970 the number of casual workers in US agriculture decreased by 33 per cent, that of seasonal workers by 41 per cent and that of permanent workers by 51 per cent. By the beginning of the 70s the permanent workers constituted a fifth of the hired work force and seasonal workers a third. The largest group of hired agricultural workers—almost half—consisted of workers employed for less than 25 days a year.

In France, between 1962 and 1975 the number of hired agricultural workers dropped from 826,000 to 376,000. The proportion of hired workers among those employed in agriculture dropped from 23 to 18 per cent.²

In Italy, the number of hired agricultural workers dropped from 1,670,000 to 1,147,000 between 1963 and 1976. Moreover, Italian agriculture was characterised by a high proportion of hired workers: in 1976 they accounted for approximately 39 per cent.³

In West Germany, permanently employed hired workers in agriculture numbered 527,000 in 1956-1957 and only 96,000 in 1977.⁴

In the United States, the number of farm workers also fell, yet their proportion among those engaged in agriculture rose. The share of hired agricultural labourers working for more than 25 days a year in the whole of the active agricultural population went up from 23 per cent in 1950 to 38.6 per cent in 1978. These figures mean that the reduction in the number of small and medium farmers and working family members was proceeding more rapidly in the United States than the ousting of hired labour.

Despite the reduction in the overall number of hired agricultural labourers, their role in production is as important as ever. As land, production and capital are being concentrated, hired agricultural labour is being employed more and more on large-scale capitalist farms and on the most successful small-scale capitalist farms, which

¹ *The Hired Farm Working Force of 1970*, Washington, 1972, p. 14.

² *Annuaire statistique de la France*, 1978, p. 159.

³ *Annuario statistico italiano*, 1964, p. 377; 1977, p. 332.

⁴ *Statistisches Jahrbuch für die BRD*, 1972, p. 40; 1978, p. 141.

together produce the bulk of marketable output. In Britain, 50 per cent of all farms produced in 1968 only 6 per cent of the output, while 12 per cent of the farms produced 54 per cent of the total agricultural output, with the farms of the latter category employing 39 per cent of the hired labour force in agriculture.¹

In the United States, where capitalist concentration in agriculture has progressed a good deal farther than in most other advanced capitalist countries, there were many large farms at the end of the 70s, each of which produced output valued at several hundred thousand dollars. A similar concentration of production would be unthinkable without the concentration of hired labour.

Technological progress in agriculture was reflected in the predominance of universal machines and sources of energy. This meant that to a growing extent agricultural workers with a narrow range of special skills had to be replaced by labourers with broader training, able not only to operate a system of machines, but also possessing knowledge and know-how necessary for carrying out a large cycle of production operations. In this connection the problem of training qualified employees was becoming more and more acute.

The capitalists succeeded in preserving within agriculture extremely disadvantageous working conditions. The farm labourers' wages were considerably lower than those received by industrial workers. This reflected the specific relationship between supply and demand on the labour market, which was extremely disadvantageous for agricultural workers, and also the weakness of their trade union organisations.

However, the concentration of hired labour on large capitalist farms leads to an exacerbation of the contradictions between labour and capital. Thus, more agricultural labourers feel inclined now to organise trade unions and extend the scale of strike action.

PROLETARIAN DETACHMENTS OF OFFICE WORKERS

In connection with the scientific and technological revolution in the post-war period and the further development of SMC there has been rapid growth and change in new detachments of the proletariat—in various groups of ordinary office workers (the lower and in part the middle echelons). As pointed out earlier, they constitute a significant stratum of the industrial proletariat and also predominate in the ranks of the working class in the service sector.

Lenin pointed out that low-ranking office workers were becoming proletarianised as early as 1917.² More recently the British sociol-

¹ *The Sociological Review*, August 1972, pp. 424, 425.

² V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 106.

ogist and Communist H. Frankel wrote: "The major change in the proletariat since Marx's time is the inclusion of millions of lower-paid non-manual workers."¹ Office workers always found themselves in a situation similar to that of industrial workers in the sense that they did not own any means of production and were, therefore, obliged to earn their living by selling their labour. In other respects, however,—economic and in particular social (the nature and organisation of their labour, employment and wage levels, pensions and other allowances, status at work, and so on)—their position was rather different. Even office workers belonging to the most widespread occupations differed significantly from industrial workers with regard to their role and place in the production process, to the nature of their labour, the size of their income, to their social origins, education levels, etc.

Economic, social, and political development in the capitalist countries particularly since the 50s has led to a significant narrowing of the gap between the office workers and industrial workers in widespread occupations with regard to all, or almost all the positions already mentioned. The majority of office workers, low-ranking employees engaged in non-physical labour have found themselves in a position which in many respects coincides with the position of the vast mass of workers: in view of this these detachments of the office workers can be regarded as part of the working class.

It was the most numerous categories of non-manual workers who joined the working class: 1) low-ranking *office*, or *clerical workers*, i.e. mainly persons engaged in non-creative work in offices and institutions of the state apparatus and all spheres of the capitalist economy; 2) hired *sales workers*, some of whom—loaders, warehouse employees, packers, and in certain cases shop assistants are essentially manual workers, while others have more in common with office workers;² 3) *middle-range specialists*—persons possessing qualifications higher than those of industrial workers, who have, as a rule, a secondary specialised education (the largest groups within this category are technicians, nurses, certain categories of teachers and those employed in child care).

The conclusion with regard to the merging of a number of mass-scale groups of "white-collar" workers with the working class does not apply to all employees within this group. Significant strata of non-manual hired workers, although in some respects they may have come to resemble the working class more, nevertheless, con-

¹ H. Frankel, *Capitalist Society and Modern Sociology*, London, 1970, p. 212.

² In connection with the widespread introduction of the latest forms of retailing the polarisation of "retail employees" into workers and office workers is becoming more pronounced.

tinue to be different from it when it comes to their role in the social organisation of labour, in the nature of their work, and levels of income, and so on. Thus, we may conclude that certain categories of white-collar workers—the middle and lower-ranking administrative staff and managers, the majority of specialists with a higher education—still belong to the middle strata of capitalist society. For some groups this process of proletarianisation has gone far enough for their status to be defined as “semi-proletarian”.

A special position is occupied by the top strata of white-collar workers, who are often incorporated into the capitalist class,¹ and to some extent by those immediately beneath them. This group comprises the upper crust of administrative staff and highly qualified specialists.

Statistics from various countries show how numbers of hired non-manual workers are growing. From official figures it is clear that by the beginning of the 70s white-collar workers of all categories had constituted approximately two-fifths of hired workers in each of the main West European countries, apart from Italy (where they made up approximately one quarter). In the United States they already accounted for half all hired workers.

This growth in the proportion of white-collar workers also reflects changes in the structure of the whole of society and changes in the composition of the working class. In Britain, for example, according to rough estimates the proportion of industrial and office workers within the proletariat was as follows: in 1951 5:1, in 1961 4:1, in 1966 close on 3:1,² and in 1971 2:1. The relative proportion of industrial and office workers in Italy was roughly the same at the beginning of the 70s. In most of the other advanced capitalist countries the number of low-ranking office workers was still closer to the number of industrial workers and in the United States it had even overtaken the number of industrial workers.³

Lenin explained this growth in the number of office employees first and foremost by reference to “the growth of large-scale capitalist production, which requires non-manual employees to a degree rising in proportion to the increase in the use of machinery and the development of industries”.⁴ In the era of the scientific and

¹ Firstly, these are owners of firms who have become part of their personnel (directors, head managers) when firms have turned into limited companies but retained their assets; secondly, hired directors and top administrators receiving enormous salaries and bonuses, thus indirectly getting a considerable share of surplus-value (and often controlling block of shares); thirdly, the top stratum of personnel in the state apparatus.

² *Great Britain*, Moscow, 1972, p. 241 (in Russian).

³ *The Working Class in the Social Structure of the Industrially Developed Capitalist Countries*, p. 314.

⁴ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, 1977, p. 221.

technological revolution this factor has a particularly important role to play, especially in connection with various types of technical personnel.

Changes affecting the numbers of ordinary office workers are of a more contradictory nature. All in all, technological progress has led to a greater demand for their labour. This is clear from the fact that their numbers in industry grew in all countries during the 50s and 60s. However, the introduction of computers limited this demand and led to a slowing down in rates of growth for this category of office workers (both in industry and in the services sector). The introduction of the latest technology based on the use of microelectronics (large integrated circuits), that began in the second half of the 70s threatens with a drastic drop in the number of office workers and has led to more unemployment in their ranks. The introduction of microelectronics has had a particularly strong impact on the services sector, which until recently automation has passed by.

As a result of this, the share of office workers within the category of white-collar workers appears to be gradually decreasing. On the other hand, the share of scientific and technical staff is on the increase (these include technicians and laboratory assistants).

Growth in the number of various types of white-collar workers in the services sector is also linked to a considerable degree—albeit indirectly—with the demands of production, with the development of productive forces. Modern production requires the priority growth rate of science and technology. Systems of general, vocational, and higher education are assuming ever greater significance to provide training for the work force that satisfies modern demands. Maintaining the work force which is subject to rapid exhaustion in capitalist production in its proper condition demands extension of the health-care system and allied services. These and other sectors in which white-collar workers predominate are growing, albeit some more quickly than others.

The increasingly complex system of capitalist reproduction requires that various types of financial and commercial establishments and advertising services be extended and developed. The rapid rise of employment—mainly of white-collar workers—in these branches of the economy in part reflects the actual needs of production and its regulation in the age of the scientific and technological revolution, and in part the irrational and parasitic nature of capitalist development. The enormous growth in the information and ideology sphere (television, radio, the press, etc.) also has two-sided implications.

The development of SMC and the extension of the military-police, economic, social, and other functions of the bourgeois state lead

to a proliferation of associated establishments, and the number of non-manual workers employed in them grows accordingly.

Two conclusions can be drawn from the above: first, the increase in the number of white-collar workers results chiefly from the objective process of development and improvement in social production; second, the absolute increase in the number of white-collar workers is to be observed both in material production (in industry), and in other spheres of social activity.

Within the overall total of white-collar workers in a number of countries, there has been a certain amount of increase in the share of those employed in industry as opposed to that of white-collar workers, employed in the services sector.¹ As a result the growth in the number of white-collar workers has been accompanied by a certain levelling out in the degree to which these two major spheres of the economy are filled with white-collar workers. An analysis of statistics for many years shows that the growth in the number of white-collar workers has been proceeding mainly thanks to increases in the low-ranking and middle-ranking categories, i.e. those white-collar workers who for all intents and purposes are part of the working class or bordering on the same. The vast mass of white-collar workers: clerical staff, typists, clerks and other office workers; various kinds of technicians, paramedics, low-ranking teachers and child care personnel without higher education and other middle-ranking personnel, cashiers, shop assistants, and other staff from the retail sector.² These groups of ordinary white-collar workers accounted for approximately three-quarters of this whole category of employees in the 50s, 60s and 70s.

In the post-war period, the advanced capitalist countries have seen the rapid growth in the number of ordinary office workers, the consequent changes in all or almost all aspects of their socioeconomic position, as well as their gradual turning into one of the main detachments of the exploited working people. Another factor which influences the position of ordinary office workers is the attempt by the bourgeoisie to use them as a source of mass-scale social support both within enterprises and within society as a whole. For this reason the capitalists retain certain privileges for white-collar workers which prevent the latter from appreciating their position that is similar to that of the workers. The attitude of the

¹ The percentage of white-collar workers in industry was as follows: 31.4 in 1950 and 37.9 in 1970 in West Germany; 33.9 in 1951 and 37.2 in 1961 in Britain; 23.7 in 1963 and 24.8 in 1976 in Italy.

² In the last decade as a result of the growth of self-service and other innovations in the retail sphere the number of hired retail personnel has ceased to grow in relation to the work force as a whole and in some countries has ceased to grow altogether.

bourgeoisie to white-collar workers is contradictory: the bourgeoisie both steps up their exploitation and retains their "special status". In general, in the era of the scientific and technological revolution the predominant trend is towards increased exploitation of white-collar workers, although its impact varies from one country to another, from one period to another and in relation to different contingents of the white-collar workers.

This trend is to a large degree shaped by the transformation of the white-collar workers into a mass category of hired workers not only on a national scale but also within specific branches of industry and in larger industrial enterprises and the services sector. In these conditions only a very small number of capitalists can allow themselves to pay white-collar workers wages higher than those dictated by the labour market, in order to sustain the "loyalty" of their staff. The pattern of expenses in establishments, where white-collar employees' wages constitute the main outgoing, prompts capitalists to seek ways of economising precisely in this sphere. The aims of capitalist production and its effectiveness can only be attained if there is "full" exploitation of the *whole* labour force, i.e. not only of workers but of the bulk of white-collar employees as well. Viewed in its historical perspective this will lead to offensives by the bourgeoisie and the capitalist state¹ on the living standards enjoyed by the majority of all employees.

The spread of education is the objective prerequisite for the undermining of the privileged position of the lowest stratum of white-collar employees. Literacy, the basis for the skills of many clerks and closely associated groups and the higher value of their labour compared to that of industrial workers' labour, ceased to be the monopoly of a relatively narrow circle of men and women from the petty bourgeoisie and higher social strata, once primary and secondary education became well-established.

The labour required of the run-of-the-mill white-collar employees changed. More and more of them came to be concentrated in large offices, design bureaus, laboratories, medical establishments, etc. Enormous establishments and their sections appeared on the scene, which assembled hundreds and sometimes thousands of white-collar employees engaged in monotonous work—clerks, technicians, sales

¹ V. I. Lenin at the dawn of our century wrote about the intensification of exploitation by the "treasury" (i.e. by the state) of the "proletariat of officialdom" consisting of petty civil servants (see: V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, pp. 92-93). At the present stage the bourgeois state by various means takes care that exploitation should be intensified not merely in relation to its own employees in the civil service but also to white-collar workers in private capitalist enterprises.

assistants, sometimes laboratory assistants, nurses, and so on.¹ However, the general level of concentration of blue-collar workers still remained higher.

The growth in the number and concentration of white-collar staff provided the prerequisite for the application of industrial methods of organisation and exploitation of their labour, methods which had already been tested in workshops. Capitalists seek by all possible means to rationalise the labour of white-collar staff, to raise its productivity and thus to exploit it more fully. In the post-war years various methods for the precise calculation and reduction of the time expended by each white-collar employee on this or that individual procedure were elaborated and applied on quite a wide scale. In the United States, things even went as far as the "conveyor-belt processing" of documents. Attempts were made to record down to the last fraction of a second the time spent not merely on individual movements but also on mental operations. Yet when all is said and done, there are still substantial differences between the labour of the majority of blue-collar workers and white-collar workers.

At the turn of the century the blue- and white-collar workers differed substantially because the latter enjoyed the job security, while the former knew no job security whatsoever. In the 19th and early 20th century when unemployment for blue-collar workers was the "norm", white-collar workers were not exposed to anything like mass unemployment. They suffered from unemployment for the first time during the crisis of 1929-1933. The growth of unemployment in the late 60s and 70s affected blue- and white-collar workers to more or less the same extent. In the United States, in the early 70s unemployment levels for office and sales workers were even higher than those for skilled workers.

There has also been a considerable change in the comparative wage levels for ordinary office workers and industrial workers. While in the 19th and early 20th century the vast mass of white-collar workers were paid far more than blue-collar workers, later the gap between the two levels of pay became far smaller. In the 70s wages paid to clerical and sales workers, and many middle-ranking specialists differed very little from average wages paid to industrial workers.²

It should be pointed out, however, that the wages similar to those

¹ The British Marxist sociologist F. D. Klingender wrote that "the amalgamation process created the monster office in which vast numbers of clerks are herded together..." (F. D. Klingender, *The Condition of Clerical Labour in Britain*, London, 1935, p. 64).

² This conclusion is only an approximation. The situation varies considerably from one country to another: as a rule, in countries that are more economically developed, white-collar workers' wages are relatively lower.

earned by industrial workers, paid out to office staff were, as a rule, earned after fewer hours. The standard working week (fixed after collective bargaining, by law or by the individual entrepreneur) for white-collar workers, even those of the lowest grade, was usually shorter than that for blue-collar workers. It is rare for those among the majority of office workers to work overtime. In the 60s and 70s, however, the working week for workers in industry began to be cut down far more rapidly than that for office workers. The same thing applies to the extension of paid summer holidays for industrial workers which also has served to close the gap (this is true in particular of France).

Differentials with regard to pensions and sickness benefits and other material privileges became smaller than before, although white-collar workers still benefited more from such arrangements than blue-collar workers.

Nowadays there are only few differences to be observed in the position of blue- and white-collar workers respectively at their place of employment—disciplinary regulations are stricter for blue-collar workers (the requirement that they should clock in and clock out, etc.), and the existence of certain privileges for white-collar workers (the opportunity to be absent from work in connection with certain family circumstances, for example) and then the purely symbolic considerations of “status”, reflected in such things as separate entrances and parking spaces, etc.

Broadly speaking, the lower and even the middle ranks of white-collar workers are losing their former privileged position and are turning into nothing more than small cogs in the machine of capitalist material and non-material production, faceless ciphers in the labour force exploited by capital.

This closing of the gap between industrial and office workers stems, of course, not only from socio-economic factors. Marxists regard class not merely as a purely objective category, but also, to use Lenin's words, as “a concept which is evolved in struggle and development”.¹ From this point of view it is also vital to attribute crucial importance to changes in the social behaviour of ordinary white-collar workers, to the growing level of their organisation and militant activity, and also to their increasingly broad involvement in the class struggle of the proletariat.²

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, 1977, p. 512.

² A more detailed analysis of the changes in the actual position of white-collar workers and also in their consciousness and behaviour is to be found in the following study: V. V. Peschansky. *White-Collar Workers in Bourgeois Society (taking Britain as an example)*, Moscow, 1975 (in Russian).

SEMI-PROLETARIAN AND TRANSITIONAL STRATA. THE WORKING CLASS AND THE INTELLIGENTSIA

When analysing the structure and composition of the working class it is essential to take into account the fact that the proletarianisation of a number of social groups and strata is a process that is not yet complete. Many of these groups and strata are at a transitional stage and have not yet become an integral part of the working class. In this connection Lenin was to write: "Capitalism would not be capitalism if the proletariat *sur sang* were not surrounded by a large number of exceedingly motley types intermediate between the proletarian and the semi-proletarian."¹

The process of proletarianisation which was to be observed in the advanced capitalist countries in the post-war years paves the way for a situation in which large numbers of people are losing their former non-proletarian social status but at the same time have not fully acquired a new, proletarian status. Such people can be defined as semi-proletarian, a term which Lenin employed widely in his detailed analysis of the class structure of capitalist society. This term applies in particular to the numerous small-scale producers in town and country who, no longer able to maintain themselves on the income to be gleaned from their own farms or small enterprises, are spending the large part of their working hours as hired labour.²

In the United States, for example, there were nearly one and a half million farms with output amounting to less than 5,000 dollars. Farms of this type could be defined as proletarian or semi-proletarian holdings. Their owners work partly on their own holdings but most of their income they earn as hired labour, usually in non-agricultural spheres of the economy. In 1960, for example, income earned outside the farm constituted 69 per cent of total family earnings for this group, and 84 per cent by 1969. During the 60s the number of these farms continued to decline steadily: there were 2,465,000 in 1960, 1,509,000 in 1969. Yet in the early 70s they still accounted for over half the total number of farms (55 per cent), and five million people lived on such farms.³ Although for those farmers, who only spend part of their working hours on their own

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, 1977, p. 74.

² The difference between semi-proletarian strata and rural "proletarians with holdings" lies in the fact that the latter are real workers whose main source of income is wages, since their tiny holdings can only be regarded as a small supplementary source of income. For semi-proletarian strata, on the other hand, their own holdings or enterprises represent a source of income at least as considerable as what they receive in wages, if not more so.

³ R. N. Nikolitch, *Family-size Farms in U.S. Agriculture*, Washington, 1972, pp. 26-27.

farms, their earnings from outside the farm, as a rule, provide the main source of their family's subsistence, their own holdings still bring in some kind of supplementary income for their family that can often be of crucial significance.

Similar processes were to become widespread also in the capitalist town in the post-war period. In a number of cases small-scale producers in the towns, no longer able to live on the income from their own enterprises, were obliged to go out and search for additional work. At the same time some blue- and white-collar workers, while still employed as hired labour, set up their own small businesses. In one way or another in all capitalist countries many small-scale producers combine their own "independent" entrepreneurial activity with wage labour. They all constitute part of the semi-proletarian stratum.

Many small-scale producers who work totally outside the system of hired labour and employees from the services sector should also be seen as part of this stratum. Independent building workers provide an example of just such a group—painters, carpenters, plasterers, roof-tilers, electricians and sanitary engineers, etc. In a certain sense it is more advantageous for the large-scale entrepreneur to use the labour of such workmen on a sub-contractual basis than to use hired labour, since many types of labour legislation and conditions of collective agreements, concluded between trade unions and building firms, do not protect the former. Owners of small petrol stations and small retail outlets, dependent upon large trading companies, find themselves in a similar situation.

The material position of hundreds of thousands of small-scale independent workmen in this category can be compared with that of some categories of low-paid workers in industry. In the United States, for example, in 1974 the average income for the vast majority of small-scale urban producers was beneath the official poverty line.¹

The semi-proletarian strata of the urban petty bourgeoisie are fairly numerous and their numbers are constantly growing partly as a result of the improvement of the more prosperous groups of small-scale property-owners, and partly as more and more peasants and farmers are being driven off the land who, having no vocational training to fall back on, attempt to set up their own small-scale enterprises.

The transitional social type of the working man is also becoming more widespread in the ranks of intelligentsia. Since professions like teaching and engineering have spread on a mass scale, considerable changes have taken place in the economic and so-

¹ Calculated on the basis of figures taken from: *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1979*, p. 563.

cial position of these groups of the intelligentsia. The main trend to be observed among the broad mass of the working intelligentsia is one of increasing proletarianisation, as reflected in many aspects of the activity of the given social stratum. First and foremost there has been a marked increase in the degree to which those engaged in brain-work are subordinate to capital. At the beginning of the century many members of the intelligentsia were still members of the liberal professions. In the 60s and the 70s those engaged in brain-work are, with rare exceptions, hired workers. As was pointed out earlier, a sizable section of scientific and technical specialists lost their administrative and managerial functions and became just another group carrying out various types of highly skilled labour.

Another trend that has emerged is that towards a smaller gap between the average wages for certain sections of the intelligentsia and those of industrial workers. Thus, in Britain in the late 60s the teacher's salary was close to the wage of the factory and office worker of a middle qualification.¹

To this we must add that the sizable sections of the intelligentsia have lost the former job security. In the early 70s in the United States, for instance, every fourth chemist was out of work: in 1972, ten thousand law-school graduates failed to find work, and many teachers were also unemployed. All in all, the level of unemployment among new graduates in 1972 came to almost 8 per cent, while the average figure for unemployment among the active population was 5.6 per cent.²

This proletarianisation of the intelligentsia which means that the overwhelming majority of this social group is drawn into the system of antagonistic production relations, serves to extend and intensify the social and class contradictions within capitalist society.

Since the mid-70s, as the result of the economic crisis and the growth of chronic unemployment in a number of capitalist countries, a rapid increase came about in the stratum of people deprived of any secure or permanent place in social production and in the social structure. Unemployed young people, including recent school-leavers and graduates, were particularly widely represented in this stratum. Living on casual earnings or unemployment benefits the people within this stratum of society are coming to resemble de-classed elements of society. A considerable proportion of them, particularly unemployed workers, retain firm links with the working class and the labour movement, but many have no such links and show inclinations towards anti-social behaviour and anarchic rebellion, and in some cases they prove receptive to the demagoguery

¹ *The British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. XXIV, No. 1, March 1973, p. 47. Later, however, teachers' salaries were raised to a significant degree.

² *Business Week*, September 23, 1972, p. 48.

of ultra-left or fascist groups. The proportion of such declassed elements is particularly great amongst ethnic minorities subjected to social discrimination (such as the Blacks in the United States) in backward "crisis" areas such as the South of Italy.

* * *

Between 1950 and 1980 the working class of the capitalist countries developed as a complex social entity incorporating exploited manual and non-manual workers and certain groups of those engaged in brain-work in all spheres of the economy, a community of men and women surrounded by large numbers of transitional but stable groups at various stages of proletarianisation. The most important features of the working class in the age of the scientific and technological revolution are, first, its improved cultural and educational level, and the increasingly intellectual demands of the work it is called upon to carry out; second, its more complex internal structure; third, the broadening of its social ties with non-proletarian and semi-proletarian strata and its growing capacity for expressing the needs and interests of the broad masses of the working people.

The working class in the capitalist countries is a powerful and growing detachment of the international proletariat, whose ranks at the end of the 70s numbered between 220 and 240 million. In the major capitalist countries the working class numbered approximately as follows: 72 million in the United States; 36 million in Japan; 20 million in Britain; 19 million in the Federal Republic of Germany; 15 million in France; 13 million in Italy.¹

The national detachments of the proletariat possess specific features stemming from the special nature of the political, economic and social development of the countries in question. A structural feature of the US working class, for example, was the high proportion of men and women employed in the services sector. In many other countries, the proportion of workers from this sector is nearing the US level.

As early as the end of the 19th century there was a particularly low proportion of agricultural labourers in the ranks of the British working class. In the post-war period there has been a rapid drop in this proportion in almost all developed capitalist countries (except Italy).

¹ These figures are based on estimates drawn up by the Institute of International Labour Movement, USSR Academy of Sciences (see: *The Working Class in the Social Structure of the Industrially Developed Countries*, p. 311; A. A. Galkin, "On the Question of the Working Class' Allies in Western Europe", *Vestnik Akademii Nauk SSSR*, No. 3, 1980, p. 74).

Similar levelling processes can be observed in the distribution of the industrial proletariat from one branch of industry to another in different countries, in levels of skills and in the partial closing of the gap between wage levels for the workers of different capitalist countries (Japan, for example, used to lag far behind the "older" capitalist countries as recently as the 50s, but since then the gap has been reduced several times over).

The above facts point to a levelling in the structure of the working class and in the position of the national detachments of the working class within the capitalist world (although considerable national differences are, undoubtedly, still retained). The mass migration of workers in the capitalist world, in particular in Western Europe, has also contributed to this levelling process. All this provides greater possibilities for the coming together of the working people from different countries in a joint struggle against international capital.

There is a growing awareness of common interests among groups within the working class despite their involvement in different types of work, different levels of skills and their belonging to different branches of industry. This is borne out by the figures pointing to social mobility within one and the same generation, as well as from one generation to another in the main capitalist countries.¹ These figures reveal, first, the high degree of the self-recruitment and self-reproduction of the working class, particularly of its main nucleus made up of industrial workers. They also reveal a decline in the role of the agricultural population as a means of replenishing the working class as the numbers of those employed in agriculture drop. Lastly, there is increased mobility to be observed between the various groups within the working class. It is important to note the considerable increase in social ties between the various groups of white-collar and blue-collar workers, particularly those of the skilled variety. This reflects the merging together of the two main contingents of the modern working class—those of the industrial workers and the proletarian majority of the office workers.²

¹ Social mobility in the capitalist countries and the reproduction of the working class have been investigated for the first time in a Soviet book—*Specific Features of the Reproduction of the Working Class in the Advanced Capitalist Countries*, Moscow, 1978 (in Russian).

² At the same time it has been established by researchers that, as a rule, rank-and-file white-collar workers have a better chance of career ("upward mobility") than blue-collar workers, and that the ranks of the former are more likely to be swelled by men and women from the middle strata of society (see: A. M. Salmin, I. N. Faleyeva, "Social Dynamics and the Reproduction of the Working Class in the Advanced Capitalist Countries" in the collection of articles entitled: *The Working Class in the World Revolutionary Process*, Moscow, 1980, p. 200, in Russian).

Changes in the composition of the working class inevitably make it appear more complex both from the social and the ideological-psychological points of view. Differences in living and working conditions, different experiences, the differing origins and traditions of various groups within the working class give rise to a wide range of differences in levels of awareness of class interests and in the demands put forward in the course of the day-to-day class struggle.

The revisionists of today, as they overemphasise these differences, try to deny the objective social unity of the proletariat by opposing the so-called "new working class" (consisting of highly skilled workers, engineers and scientific personnel) to the "old" one¹ and by maintaining that the working class has been split for once and for all into a number of separate "classes". In actual fact the dominant trend in these structural changes finds expression in the closing of the gap between the social positions and interests of exploited manual and non-manual workers. This serves to broaden the social basis of the labour movement and provides new preconditions for the militant unity of the various detachments of the working people.

¹ Mallet, *La Nouvelle classe ouvrière*, Paris, 1963.

Chapter 5

THE ECONOMIC POSITION OF THE WORKING CLASS

In the post-war period the position of the working class has been determined first and foremost by the social consequences of the development of the capitalist economy. As mentioned earlier, these consequences have taken the form of accelerated growth and major structural changes in the productive forces in the course of the scientific and technological revolution, of further concentration, monopolisation and internationalisation of production, and of increased intervention by the bourgeois state in the economic life of society and in the relations between labour and capital. Each of these phenomena have exerted a specific influence on the material and social position of working people, and on their struggle against the ruling class.

Various combinations of the above factors of social development in the different capitalist countries meant that during the post-war years specific socio-economic and political conditions of the struggle of the working class varied considerably. In the late 40s and early 50s the effects of the Second World War still made themselves felt and these varied considerably from state to state and from people to people: in some of the advanced capitalist countries the economy had not only not suffered any serious damage but in some respects had been even consolidated, while in others—the vast majority of the countries of Western Europe and Japan—production capacity and the housing stock had been depleted, often severely. While in some of these countries all that was required was for factories to be readapted to peace-time production and for the work force to be demobilised, in others it was of a question of restoring the nation's economy.

The scientific and technological revolution together with measures of state-monopolistic regulation made possible the accelerated economic development in the capitalist countries in the 50s and 60s. Rates of growth in industrial production were, on the whole, higher

than they had been before the war. However, this development was by no means even: in the United States, for example, where processes of industrialisation had been completed before the war, lower rates of economic growth were to be observed than those in Japan and in most countries of Western Europe. Yet in the sphere of technological progress the United States had far outstripped the other capitalist countries.

In the 60s and 70s, substantial structural changes took place in the economy of these countries, stemming from the further advance of the scientific and technological revolution. Economic growth went hand in hand with disproportions reflected in the development of particular branches of industry and regions, and in the economic and social position of the respective groups of the working people. The ruthless plunder of natural resources greatly exacerbated ecological problems. Furthermore, in the second half of the 60s, inflationary price rises accelerated and the monetary and financial crisis became more acute. At the beginning of the 70s, for the first time in the history of capitalism, an energy crisis occurred. This gradual accumulation of negative phenomena in the development of the capitalist economy led up to what was to be the most profound economic crisis in the post-war period, which broke in the mid-70s. It affected the whole of the capitalist world and came hand in hand with inflationary price rises, which were unusual for that particular phase of the economic cycle. The exacerbation of the contradictions in the capitalist economy in the 70s caused a profound crisis in the well-established system of state-monopolistic regulation of the economy. All these developments were to have an extremely negative effect upon the position of the working people.

UNEMPLOYMENT

Despite the relatively high rates of economic growth during most of the post-war period and the introduction in a number of capitalist countries of government measures to maintain employment levels, unemployment remained the lot of millions of working people. Some new factors made the problem even more acute than before. In addition to the cyclical fluctuations in the course of capitalist reproduction, the consequences of the population explosion of the early post-war years had an increasing effect upon the unemployment curve ever since the mid-60s as indeed had the accelerated scientific and technical progress and the growing structural contradictions and disproportions on the labour market.

As can be seen from Table 4, there are significant differences in the scale and dynamics of unemployment from one country and one period to another. In the early post-war years, in a number of West

European countries (West Germany, Italy, etc.), whose economies had suffered particularly badly during the war, the level of unemployment was higher than in the United States, whereas in the 50s, 60s and 70s unemployment levels in the United States often exceeded those in other capitalist countries. While during most of the 50s and the early 60s unemployment began to climb down in many countries, after the end of the 60s it began to rise everywhere. This meant that in the 50s and 60s the situation on the labour market which had taken shape on the basis of the supply and demand for labour had, on the whole, been relatively favourable for the working class in the majority of capitalist countries. Rates of growth in the able-bodied population had been moderate, while accelerated economic growth had kept the demand for labour at a sufficiently high level. A number of countries (such as West Germany, France and Japan) experienced a labour shortage and many of them dealt with this shortage by encouraging the immigration of foreign workers.

Table 4

Changing Levels of Unemployment in Major Capitalist Countries*

	USA		Japan		FRG		France		Britain		Italy	
	000	%	000	%	000	%	000	%	000	%	000	%
1950	3,350	5.3	440	1.2	1,580	10.2	153	0.8	332	1.6	1,615	8.3
1955	2,904	4.4	680	1.6	928	5.1	160	0.8	244	1.1	1,913	9.8
1960	3,931	5.6	500	1.1	237	1.2	131	0.7	377	1.6	836	4.2
1965	3,366	4.5	390	0.8	147	0.6	142	0.7	347	1.5	721	3.6
1970	4,088	4.9	590	1.2	149	0.7	262	1.3	612	2.6	609	3.2
1971	4,993	5.9	640	1.2	185	0.8	338	1.7	792	3.5	609	3.2
1972	4,840	5.6	730	1.4	246	1.1	384	1.9	876	3.8	697	3.7
1973	4,304	4.9	680	1.3	274	1.2	394	1.9	619	2.7	668	3.5
1974	5,076	5.6	730	1.4	583	2.6	498	2.4	615	2.6	560	2.9
1975	7,830	8.5	1,000	1.9	1,074	4.7	840	4.1	978	4.1	654	3.3
1976	7,288	7.7	1,080	2.0	1,060	4.6	933	4.5	1,359	5.7	732	3.7
1977	6,855	7.0	1,100	2.0	1,030	4.5	1,072	5.1	1,484	6.2	1,545	7.2
1978	6,047	6.0	1,240	2.2	993	4.3	1,167	5.6	1,475	6.1	1,571	7.2
1979	5,963	5.8	1,170	2.1	876	3.8	1,350	6.4	1,307	5.4	1,698	7.7
1980	7,449	7.1	1,140	2.0	889	3.8	1,451	6.8	1,668	6.8	1,698	7.6

* The above figures are based on official statistics which do not fully reflect the scale of unemployment.

Sources: *Year Book of Labour Statistics*, 1957, Table 10; 1967, Table 10; 1979, Table 10; *Main Economic Indicators*, April 1981.

After the late 60s the situation began to change. There was a sudden influx of young people to the labour markets resulting from the high birth rate in the first five years after the war. Company mergers and take-overs became more widespread and led to the closure of smaller enterprises, competition within the world and home markets became more intense, entrepreneurs went out of their way to keep down production costs by automation, tighter control and new technology and also by introducing modern methods for the capitalist rationalisation of labour: all this led to unemployment on an increasingly wide scale.

While the supply of labour was growing, the spread of intensive methods for the development of production under the impact of the scientific and technological revolution under capitalism made it more difficult for the economy to absorb new contingents of the labour force. Some technically advanced branches of industry (the oil-processing, aviation, motor and steel industries) increased output, while cutting down on the number of blue-collar and white-collar workers they employed. From the mid-60s onwards the overall increase in the number of jobs was modest, to say the least, in the majority of the advanced capitalist countries. The general level of employment in 1978 in comparison to 1970 was 107.8 per cent in Italy, 100.9 per cent in Britain, 94.3 per cent in West Germany, 102.8 per cent in France, 106.2 per cent in Japan, and 120.0 per cent in the United States.¹

In major capitalist countries unemployment reveals a number of distinctive features. First of all, its high level continued long beyond the crisis phase of production. Indicative in this respect is the economic crisis of 1969-1970 in the United States and still more so the crisis of 1974-1975. While the level of industrial production began to rise from November 1970 and by April 1972 had exceeded the highest point reached prior to the crisis, unemployment at around 6 per cent of the economically active population continued for an unusually long time—for twenty months—and only in the middle of 1972 did it begin gradually to come down, but at the beginning of 1973 as well it was still at the 5.5 per cent mark.

Another characteristic feature is that even during periods of relatively rapid growth in production the capitalist economy has proved incapable of making full use of available labour resources. Mass unemployment appears as chronic at all phases of the industrial cycle.

Exacerbation of the problem of unemployment is one of the socio-economic consequences of the scientific and technological revolution under capitalism, and of the economy's increasing instability,

¹ Calculated from: *Year Book of Labour Statistics*. 1979, Table 4.

and of the significant increase in the export of capital by the multinational monopolies, which during the 70s began to transfer part of their production in a number of important branches of industry to less advanced and even developing countries.

Although the levels of vocational training and the skills of the labour force were rising, they still lagged behind the objective demands of the scientific and technological revolution. Class and property privileges in the capitalist system of education, the frequently inadequate level of general education and the narrow range of workers' vocational skills, together with the lack of any really long-term planning with regard to the training of the work force, all made it difficult for a significant section of the work force, particularly its younger ranks, to adapt to the new demands of the labour market. In Britain, one team of researchers established that there were at least two million virtually illiterate teenagers. In West Germany, according to some estimates, one out of ten people can hardly read. In the United States, according to research findings collected in 1970, 18.5 million Americans aged 16 and over were virtually illiterate.¹

This means that not only does the contradiction between overall demand for labour and its supply become more important but also the disparities between the two from the structural point of view. As a result unemployment is found side by side with a serious shortage of certain types of labour (more often than not those requiring high-level or new skills). Part of the labour force is depreciating and the scale of regional unemployment is growing. Because of this there is growth in the numbers of the unemployed of long standing and also in the numbers of workers who leave the labour market for ever.

Centres of high unemployment took shape in economically backward regions and in places where enterprises in branches of industry that have lost their former economic significance are situated. Regions of this kind include, for instance, Northern England, Scotland, Northern Ireland (in the United Kingdom), Flanders in Belgium, and the South of Italy. Capitalist integration serves to intensify this process.

Structural changes within the working class are facilitating the growth in the reserve army of labour. Many trades that have become irrelevant to production become obsolete within the context of the scientific and technological revolution.

A new phenomenon of recent decades is the growth of unemployment among white-collar workers. This is one of the first results of the introduction of mechanisation and automation in office work,

¹ *U.S. News and World Report*, August 19, 1974, pp. 37, 40.

the spread of self-service in the retail trade and of the centralisation and automation of control under capitalism. Although the proportion of unemployed among white-collar workers is far smaller than that found among blue-collar workers, during the last 15 years the gap between the respective figures was clearly closing. As a result, in the United States, for example, the share of white-collar workers among those without work rose from 20.2 per cent in 1960 to 28.6 per cent in 1979.¹ The growth in unemployment among office workers—the largest section within this category—was particularly great. In 1978, it reached 15.8 per cent of the total number of unemployed in West Germany and 16 per cent in Britain.

Unemployment does not affect the various groups of industrial workers equally. The highest unemployment levels are always to be found among unskilled workers. In the United States, for example, the percentage of unemployed among unskilled workers was more than twice as great as that found among skilled workers. In Britain, in 1979, 36.5 per cent of the unemployed were unskilled workers, 9.5 per cent were skilled workers and 22.6 per cent were semi-skilled workers.² In France, among those seeking work in 1965 over 69 per cent were unskilled labourers, nearly 26 per cent were skilled workers and 5 per cent were foremen, technicians, and so on. Yet in the 70s unemployment began to hit skilled workers more and more, and also white-collar workers and administrative and technical personnel. In 1978, skilled workers and office workers already accounted for 48.7 per cent of the unemployed, while foremen, administrative personnel and technicians for only 10.2 per cent.³

In the post-war period, there was a particularly sharp rise in unemployment among the working people in the backward regions, among young people and the national and ethnic minorities. In the USA, for example, in 1977, Blacks and ethnic minorities accounted for 21.6 per cent of the unemployed, while they only made up 11.7 per cent of the active population. In many countries, the unemployed were becoming noticeably “younger”. A certain section of today’s generation of young people immediately after completing their secondary schooling or even university education became part of the army of those searching for work for a long time (sometimes even for good), without ever having experienced work, while others were thrown out of industrial production before they had time to gain

¹ *Manpower Report of the President. 1975*, Washington, p. 235; *Employment and Earnings*, January 1980, p. 167.

² Figures drawn from: *Department of Employment Gazette*, November 1979, p. 1103.

³ Figures compiled on the basis of material in *Bulletin mensuel de statistique*, No. 1, January 1978, pp. 15-17.

any experience or vocational training, which fact made it harder for them to find jobs later on. In Italy, in 1959, 33 per cent of the unemployed were those seeking work for the first time, and by 1975 they had come to account for 58.2 per cent of the total.¹ At the beginning of the 1980, in the United States young people (those aged 25 and under) made up 47.7 per cent of the unemployed. Generally speaking, unemployment was more rife among young people than in other age groups. With every decade this trend comes more clearly to the fore: in the 50s 11.3 per cent of Americans aged between 16 and 19 were unemployed, while the overall percentage embracing all age groups was 4.5 per cent, in the 60s the respective figures were 14.5 per cent (4.8 per cent), in the first half of the 70s 15.8 per cent (5.4 per cent) and by the end of the 70s 17 per cent (over 6 per cent).² The provision of employment for young people is one of the major social and economic problems in bourgeois society, one that can flare up into social and political unrest at any moment.

As women come to engage more in economic activity, so their share in the reserve labour force also grows. In the United States, women accounted for 31.9 per cent of the unemployed in 1950, 35.5 per cent in 1960, 47.4 per cent in 1974 and 46 per cent at the beginning of 1979.³

The "last word" of capitalism is the emergence of a professional category of "redundant people", unemployed with technical diplomas, degrees and academic records. This is a reflection of the development of new, even more acute forms of capitalist waste in the utilisation of productive forces. In the United States, for example, at the beginning of 1979, close on 347,000 graduates (i.e. 2.3 per cent of the total) numbered among those who had been made redundant.⁴ In West Germany, in 1978, men and women who graduated from university or completed specialised technical training at the secondary level made up 9 per cent of the unemployed.⁵ Possession of a degree no longer guarantees its owner a job. Unemployment among graduates is now becoming a phenomenon characteristic of the whole capitalist world.

¹ *Socio-Economic Problems Facing Working People in Capitalist Countries*, Moscow, 1974, p. 67 (in Russian); *Mondo Economico*, 1979, No. 9, p. 39.

² Figures drawn from: *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 1978, pp. 398, 408; *Economic Report of the President*, 1979, Washington, p. 217; *Employment and Earnings*, March 1980, p. 32.

³ Figures drawn from: *Manpower Report of the President*, 1975, p. 231; *Employment and Earnings*, March 1979, p. 36.

⁴ Figures calculated using the source: *Employment and Earnings*, March 1979, p. 36.

⁵ *IPW-Berichte*, Berlin, 1979, No. 2, p. 36.

The sharp increase in the scale of unemployment in the late 60s and 70s testifies to the failure of the "full employment" policy. This policy was proclaimed aloft in the post-war years by the governments of the majority of the big capitalist countries under pressure from the labour movement and the example set by the socialist states which make it possible to fully utilise available labour resources at high rates of scientific and technological progress. Against a background of rampant inflation the "full-employment" policy was often sacrificed to anti-inflationary measures and turned into its opposite—the policy stimulating unemployment. As a result state-monopolist regulation of the economy was unable to stem unemployment or inflation.

Fear of the political consequences of mass unemployment impels the bourgeois state to introduce measures aimed at reducing this complex problem (public works for the unemployed, the payment of social security over a longer period, the introduction of more wide-scale systems for vocational training, etc.). Yet the narrow class base of the bourgeois state means that these measures cannot prove particularly effective.

The system of unemployment insurance set up in the capitalist countries under working-class pressure contains serious flaws, which become more and more noticeable as unemployment grows. In the first place, by no means all those people who have lost their jobs have the right to unemployment benefits. In most cases they are only forthcoming for a limited period and only for those who have been employed over a fixed period before becoming unemployed and who were insured during a specified period. In some countries, unemployment insurance is not made available to some categories of workers (agricultural labourers, domestic servants, casual workers, etc.). In accordance with OECD calculations 49 per cent of the unemployed were not receiving cash benefits in Italy, 39 per cent in France and 20 per cent in Britain in the years 1974-1975.¹

Unemployment benefits only compensate in part for lost earnings when working people are made redundant. In Britain, according to rough estimates, the unemployment benefit paid at a fixed rate plus various supplements come to almost half what wages would be. In France, most of the unemployed receive unemployment benefit that amounts to 2/3 of the former average wage. According to a law introduced in 1974, only 20-30 per cent of those who were dismissed for economic reasons theoretically had the right to receive unemployment benefit that amounted to 90 per cent of their former wages (in practice though a far smaller section of the unemployed enjoyed this right). In West Germany, unemployment bene-

¹ *OECD Economic Outlook. Occasional Studies*, July 1975, p. 5.

fit amounting to 68 per cent of former wages is paid to the unemployed who worked at least six months prior to redundancy from funds formed from hired workers' contributions and contributions from entrepreneurs. The situation regarding unemployment benefit is not better in the United States. In 15 states where nearly half those who have unemployment insurance live, maximum weekly payments do not amount to even half the average wage. In the remaining states unemployment benefits come to between one half and two-thirds of average weekly earnings.¹ These unemployment benefits wrested from the capitalists by the organised working class in its hard struggle are quickly reduced by incessant inflation.

The hardships that fall to the lot of the working people as a result of the deepening economic contradictions of capitalism testify to the fact that neither state regulation of the economy nor existing insurance systems are enough to protect the working class from unemployment and the material and moral problems that come in its wake. Only the struggle of the working class is able to introduce changes in the operation of the laws of capitalism, which condemn millions of people to forced unemployment, and to soften the impact of unemployment for the working people.

WAGES

The situation on the labour market that took shape in the 50s and lasted till the second half of the 60s proved, on the whole, favourable for the economic struggle of the working class. Further improvements in the organisation of the working class were to have a decisive influence on changes in wage levels, as were the enhanced role of collective agreements in that context, and the trade unions' greater capacity for overcoming the negative effect of inflation and growing unemployment during periods of crisis.

The major intensification of the working class' active role in the functioning and development of the whole economic set-up also made itself felt with regard to the value of labour power. The rapid growth in expenditure on the general education and vocational training for working people and the rise in their levels of skill put up the value of labour power. A crucial factor in the rising value of labour power was the extending range of the worker's family's essential needs. Marx wrote in this connection: "...The number and extent of his so-called necessary wants, as also the modes of satisfying them ... depend, therefore, to a great extent on the degree of civilisation of a country, more particularly on the conditions under which, and consequently on the habits and degree of comfort

¹ *Manpower Report of the President. 1974, Washington, p. 46.*

in which, the class of free labourers has been formed. In contradistinction therefore to the case of other commodities, there enters into the determination of the value of labour-power a historical and moral element."¹ This issue was also considered by Lenin in his work *On the So-Called Market Question*, where he wrote: "...The development of capitalism inevitably entails a rising level of requirements for the entire population, including the industrial proletariat."² Objective economic processes create the material preconditions for "elevating needs"; the developing consciousness of the working class and its struggle against the intensification of capitalist exploitation contribute to the practical fulfilment of these preconditions.

The scientific and technological revolution has brought about a change in the structure of the working class consumption and led to uninterrupted growth in the range of consumer goods and services. Since the 50s consumer goods have gradually become part of the everyday life of the widest range of social strata, including the proletariat, in the advanced capitalist countries, goods that were previously known only to privileged social groups (electrical household appliances, private vehicles, etc.); expenditure has also increased on children's education, health care and fitness, etc. These new goods and services have become an integral component of the usual level of satisfaction of material needs, without which the normal reproduction of the labour force would not be possible. The extension of the range of the worker's family's essential needs, increasing complexity of labour and increased expenditure on education and training of working people and the intensification of labour have given rise to a trend for the enhanced value of labour power, which provides the objective precondition for rises in real wages. This trend for the most part has been made possible in the course of the class struggle between the forces of organised labour and capital. All in all, during the post-war years real wages have increased in all advanced capitalist countries (see Table 5).

It should be remembered that the above indices reflecting changes in wages are highly relative. They are based on figures drawn primarily from large- and medium-scale enterprises, where wages, as a rule, are higher than in small-scale enterprises. The indices for retail prices and living costs are usually out of data and do not fully reflect high prices, since they scale down expenditure on transport, housing, cultural requirements and they do not take into account tax deductions or contributions for social insurance. Therefore, the indices for nominal wages make them seem higher than

¹ Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1974, p. 168.

² V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 106.

they really are and indices for living costs scale down rises in prices. Nevertheless, the figures provided in the table below make it possible to trace the main trends in the evolution of real wages.

Table 5

**Real Wages and Trends in the Latter for the Periods
1950-1960, 1960-1970 and 1970-1980*.**

Year	USA	Japan	FRG	France	Britain	Italy
1950	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
1955	115.0	134.1	129.0	132.6	112.1	103.9
1960	123.3	168.3	161.7	147.8	130.1	118.8
1960	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
1965	112.4	119.1	135.9	125.2	111.9	130.9
1970	115.9	180.3	171.4	157.4	124.9	177.6
1970	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
1971	101.8	108.3	104.6	105.1	100.8	106.8
1972	106.0	119.8	107.1	111.2	109.0	110.3
1973	106.0	130.6	110.9	123.7	114.0	122.5
1974	101.6	132.9	112.1	129.3	116.8	123.4
1975	98.5	135.8	111.4	135.7	115.2	135.1
1976	99.9	140.4	116.1	142.3	110.7	139.7
1977	101.0	142.5	120.1	147.2	104.4	150.4
1978	101.3	147.2	123.3	151.8	104.3	156.2
1979	98.3	151.8	128.4	157.5	107.0	181.6
1980**	97.1	208.5	129.4	168.9	113.0	215.9

* Calculations are based on weekly wages for the USA and FRG, on hourly rates of pay for Italy and France, on monthly wages for Japan and on men's weekly wages for Britain.

** Figures relate to the fourth quarter of the year.

Sources: *Socio-Economic Problems facing Working People in Capitalist Countries*, pp. 156-157; *Year Book of Labour Statistics*, 1979, Tables 17, 23; 1980, Tables 17, 23; *Monthly Statistics of Japan*, March 1980.

Despite the existence of relatively favourable economic and social conditions for the struggle of the working class, the trend towards higher wages which was dominant in the post-war period was, as a rule, hard to maintain, in view of numerous factors that were working powerfully against it. Fluctuations in wages were particularly uneven in the 70s. In the first place there was a reduction in the rates of growth of real wages. This was typical with regard to Japan and West Germany, for example, where up until then rates of

growth had been relatively high.¹ Moreover, there was actually a drop in real wages during the 70s, in some countries at least. According to the figures listed in the table, this was the case in the United States (in 1974-1975 and in 1979-1980), in West Germany (1975) and in Britain (1975-1978). The growing trend towards a decline in the working people's living standards stemmed in large measure from a most unfavourable combination of negative consequences of the economic crisis and inflation.

In addition, state-monopolistic regulation also exerted a major corrective influence on changes in nominal and real wages. This influence incorporated political pressure aimed at holding in check rises in wages and fringe benefits, the establishment of low minimum wages, direct "freezing" of wages, indirect influence on the wage structure through distortion of official indices for prices and living costs, the regulation of conditions for collective agreements and direct intervention in labour conflicts.

One of the most conspicuous ways in which the role of the bourgeois state as a social regulator has been extended is that of the "incomes policy". According to concepts put forward by bourgeois economists, the essence of this policy is to regulate through the state apparatus all types of income, so as to ensure stable economic growth, stable prices, full employment and a satisfactory balance of payments. Thus the "incomes policy" serves to hold back the growth of wages and sometimes to "freeze" them. Control over prices and profits is far less effective and often proves no more than a sham.

Experience in implementing the "incomes policy" has been gleaned in a number of capitalist countries. In Britain, the Netherlands and the Scandinavian countries state measures were introduced to regulate wages and in a number of cases this was carried out with the approval of trade union leaders. In other capitalist countries attempts (often unsuccessful) were made to win the agreement of the trade unions to implement the "incomes policy", while at the same time the state was employing ruthless means for holding wages down.

The development of SMC paved the way for active intervention from the state in the process of collective bargaining. This intervention was carried out by fixing the limits for wage increases in the course of collective bargaining in keeping with the "incomes policy", and also through foisting on the bargaining parties conditions, which made wage increases dependent upon the indices of economic performance. Tactics of this kind were aimed at introduc-

¹ Data for France and Italy are insufficiently indicative in this respect, if for no other reason they are based on hourly rates of pay, which change less than do weekly or monthly rates of pay under the impact of an economic slump.

ing a spirit of class collaboration into the work of trade unions and the social consciousness of the working people, actively involving them in the process of capitalist accumulation. At the same time these tactics considerably reduced the opportunities for the working people to achieve higher wages. In the late 60s and 70s, for example, the French government sought to conclude "progress contracts" based on similar principles in nationalised and private enterprises and to introduce on a wide scale systems for "profit-sharing" for employees and also self-financing for enterprises (for example, sale of some shares among workers of the enterprise concerned).

Intervention by the state into the collective-bargaining regulation of industrial relations signifies a substantial restriction of opportunities for the working people to achieve concessions from the capitalists, starting out from the alignment of class forces in an individual enterprise, branch of industry or country. State intervention is being used on an increasingly wide scale to change the balance of power in the interests of the bourgeoisie.

Similar goals are pursued through state legislation directed against strike action. In the United States, for example, the government, basing its actions on the Taft-Hartley Act of 1947, banned strikes on several occasions during conflicts which arose in the course of negotiations on the subject of collective agreements. Considerable restrictions on strikes while collective agreements were being drawn up were introduced by the British Industrial Relations Act (in force during the period 1971-1974). In Sweden, a law concerning collective agreements introduced in 1977 made it illegal to declare strikes while such agreements were in force.

The state's taxation policy is a prominent instrument in the arsenal of the ruling class' means of the suppression of attempts by working people to increase their income. After the last war there has been a considerable rise in income tax, which has to a large extent served to curtail the size of nominal wages.

As emerges from the calculations drawn up by the OECD Committee on Fiscal Affairs, in 1976 direct taxation and social insurance contributions for a married worker with two children accounted for 18 per cent of his wages in France, 33 per cent in the FRG, 13 per cent in Italy and Japan, 25 per cent in the United States and 34 per cent in Britain. In the main capitalist countries taxes and social insurance contributions reduced the gross wages of a married worker with two children by 16 per cent, those of a married worker without children by 22 and those of a single worker by 26 per cent.¹

¹ *The Tax/Benefit Position of Selected Income Groups in OECD Member Countries, 1972-1976. A Report by the Committee on Fiscal Affairs*, Paris, 1978.

In the post-war period, indirect taxation increased particularly rapidly. Since it was mainly goods designed for mass consumption that were subject to this type of taxation and these were goods which occupied a significant place in the spending patterns of low-income families it dealt a still more serious blow to the material position of working people than does direct taxation. In capitalist countries, the working people pay the majority of the indirect taxes, between two-thirds and three-quarters.

Between 1950 and 1980, in West Germany, indirect taxation from blue-collar and white-collar workers increased nearly eight times, and indirect taxation collected from entrepreneurs by four and a half times. In 1970, the total collected as indirect taxes reduced gross wages by 32.9 per cent but gross revenue from companies and property by only 18.2 per cent, while in 1950 the corresponding figures had been 26.5 per cent and 20.2 per cent.¹ In Britain, in 1964, indirect taxation took 21 per cent of an income of £460, 16 per cent of an income of £990 and 10 per cent of an income totalling £2,120-£2,570.²

The regressive nature of indirect taxation clearly cancels out the superficially progressive character of direct taxes. In West Germany, for instance, the share of all sorts of taxes deducted from wages during the period 1950-1970 grew from 35.7 to 48.1 per cent, while taxes on the gross revenues from companies and property fell from 37.2 per cent to 34.9 per cent. In Britain, in 1976, a family with an income of £46 a week (low-paid categories of workers) paid approximately 17 per cent of its income in the form of direct taxation and 23 per cent in the form of indirect taxation (40 per cent in all). A family with an income of £61 a week (wages of a manual worker) paid out 19 and 21 per cent respectively. A family with an income of £88 a week (average wages for a white-collar worker) paid 21 and 18 per cent respectively. A family with an income of £127 a week (the wages of a well-paid white-collar worker) paid out 24 per cent in the form of direct taxation and 16 per cent in indirect taxation (40 per cent in all).³ Overall taxation served rather to widen than narrow the gap in the levels of individual incomes in the various groups.

A similar influence on the changing scale of wages was that exerted by inflation. The French Marxist economist Jean-Claude Delaunay wrote: "Inflation is one of the forms of exploitation to which the working people are subjected, one of the ways in which the capitalists appropriate at no cost to themselves the social labour

¹ *DWI-Berichte*, No. 6, 1971, pp. 11, 13, 46.

² *Comment*, May 6, 1967, p. 287.

³ Calculations based on figures from *Social Trends*, 1979, p. 106.

of those directly engaged in production.”¹ The uninterrupted and ever more rapid growth of the cost of living, as the major consequence of inflation, is responsible for the trend to increase prices more rapidly than wages, and for the deterioration in the material position of the working class. The combination of this trend with the rapid growth of the army of unemployed led to a situation in which the economic struggle of working people in a number of cases proved insufficient to avert a fall in real wages.

Higher living costs quickly swallow up a significant amount of increased wages, which the working people succeed in attaining in the course of the class struggle. In the period 1963-1972, for example, increased retail rises “swallowed up”, according to some estimates, 70 per cent of the increase in nominal wages in Britain, 68 per cent in France, 67 per cent in Italy, 60 per cent in the United States and 53 per cent in Japan. Inflationary price rises contribute to all-pervading social tensions in the capitalist countries. It is the poorest families who bear the brunt of the material hardship stemming from the rising prices. In many cases retail prices for various types of goods and services increase erratically. In some countries, for example, goods which become more expensive particularly rapidly are those which occupy an important place in the budget of low-income families. In Britain, for example, during the period 1950-1972 prices for consumer goods went up by 154.4 per cent and food prices by 185.8 per cent and those for housing by 218.3 per cent. In France during the period 1962-1972, prices for consumer goods went up by 53.7 per cent, those for food by 55.1 per cent and for housing by 64.1 per cent. In Italy, during the period 1953-1972, the prices of consumer goods went up by 82.2 per cent and those for housing by 294.4 per cent.

Taking away or reducing in value a large part of the incomes of working people as they do, taxation and price rises constitute an important instrument for supplementary exploitation of these people outside the sphere of production. That which the working class succeeds in winning in collective agreements at factory level, in the individual firm or branch of industry, the ruling class can to a large degree neutralise with the help of the state's taxation policy and inflationary price rises.

All in all, as pointed out earlier, in the course of the post-war period real wages have risen in all advanced capitalist countries. This rise, however, has been neither constant nor steady: nor has it helped equally the various detachments of the proletariat from different trades or of different ethnic origin.

The largest rise in real wages was that in the FRG, Japan and

¹ *Economie et politique*, November 1971, No. 208, p. 61.

Italy, where in the early post-war years wage levels had been very low. Marx's words are most apt in relation to the situation pertaining in these countries: "You must not, therefore, allow yourselves to be carried away by the high-sounding per cents in the *rate* of wages. You must always ask, What was the *original* amount?"¹

Despite the fact that the working class succeeded in achieving significant wage increases, acute forms of poverty still remained the lot of a big sector of the working people in the industrially developed capitalist countries. In the United States, the richest of the capitalist countries, the incomes of 25 million people (i.e. 11.8 per cent of the population) were below the poverty line in 1976.²

Many detachments of the working people were, and still are, subjected to blatant discrimination with regard to wages and working conditions. This applies above all to women, young people, immigrants and ethnic minorities. In the United States, for example, women's wages in 1978 amounted on average to 61 per cent of men's wages, including 72 per cent of wages of specialists, 59 per cent of wages of administrative personnel, 58 per cent of wages of skilled machine-operators.³ Even the Council of Economic Advisers for the President of the United States was obliged to admit that the difference in these two sets of wages was the result not merely of educational differences, experience and length of service, levels of responsibility, etc., but also the result of discrimination on the part of employers.⁴

Women in other capitalist countries as well received far lower wages than men as late as the early 70s: in Britain their wages were lower by 41 per cent, in Belgium by 32 per cent, in Italy by 25 per cent, in France by 23 per cent and in West Germany by 30 per cent.⁵ Women's wages in the manufacturing industry in Japan, according to figures for January 1979, had not even reached half those of the men in the same industry.⁶

Wage trends and levels vary from one branch of industry to another, from one category of workers to another, between regions and factories. These differences stem both from the primary level of earnings, the stage of scientific and technological progress that has been achieved, the level of concentration of production and also the level of organisation and militant activity of the working class. It was those groups within the working class who had steady jobs and possessed skills required by modern production, who

¹ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Volume Two, p. 338.

² *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 1977, p. 453.

³ *Monthly Labor Review*, August 1979, p. 36.

⁴ *Economic Report of the President, 1973*, Washington, pp. 106-107.

⁵ *World Marxist Review*, No. 5, 1974, p. 43.

⁶ *Rodo tokei chyosa geppo*, No. 3, 1979, p. 44.

were united in strong trade unions, and who achieved a more or less tolerable standard of living.

The main groups within the working class earned wages on a scale which could not in any way be regarded as sufficient to satisfy their growing needs. This is borne out by the disparity between their wages and the standard budget (subsistence wage), allowing for no more than the minimum norms for consumer goods and services. In the United States, in 1978, wages for male workers remained at 20.4 per cent lower than the most modest standard budget drawn up by the Department of Labor (for skilled workers the equivalent figure was 20.4 per cent, for semi-skilled 34.1 per cent and for non-skilled workers 46.1 per cent) and that of male white-collar workers was 28.8 per cent lower. Only wages of specialists and managerial staff exceeded the standard budget.¹ In France, a third of the 15 million wage and salary workers earned less than 1,000 francs monthly, i.e. less than the minimum which, according to the trade union organisations, was essential for a single person to have a tolerable life.² In West Germany, in 1973, more than 75 per cent of blue-collar and white-collar workers earned less than a thousand marks a month, while the average family of four people (according to 1972 figures) needed to spend 1,312 marks.³

Despite a certain amount of wage increases the gap between the incomes of the bourgeoisie and those of the working class continued to widen. Researchers Lester C. Thurow and Robert Lucas concluded on the basis of post-war data relating to the material position of American families that in absolute terms the inequality in the distribution of incomes was becoming more acute. In 1947, the average income of the richest 20 per cent of families was 10,500 dollars higher than the income of the poorest 20 per cent of families; in 1969, this difference had grown to 19,000 dollars. Over the same period the gap in the incomes of the 5 per cent of poorest and richest families had grown from 17,000 to 27,600 dollars.⁴

"...Poverty grows, not in the physical but in the social sense, i.e., in the sense of the disparity between the increasing level of consumption by the bourgeoisie and consumption by society as a whole, and the level of the living standards of the working people."⁵ These words of Lenin's written as long ago as the beginning

¹ Figures calculated from: *Statistical Abstract of the United States*. 1979, p. 419; *Monthly Labor Review*, No. 9, 1979, p. 36.

² *World Marxist Review*, 1972, No. 8, p. 28.

³ *Unsere Zeit*, October 5, 1973; *Handelsblatt*, June 5, 1973.

⁴ L. C. Thurow and R. Lucas, *The American Distribution of Income. A Structural Problem*, Washington, 1972, p. 7.

⁵ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, 1972, p. 201.

of the century are as relevant as ever today. While a trend towards an absolute deterioration in the position of the working people in the post-war years has for the most part been held in check (particularly during periods of a favourable economic situation) after tense class battles, the relative deterioration of their position has come particularly clearly to the fore in the relation between the rates at which wages increase, on the one hand, and the growth of the profit margin for the monopoly capitalists, on the other hand. In West Germany, for example, pure profit from 100 major companies (after tax) during the period 1966-1973 rose by 118 per cent, while wages for industrial and office workers (after tax and social insurance contributions) grew by only 71 per cent, although over the same period the number of those in employment had increased.¹ Increased productivity resulted first and foremost in greater profits for the powerful capitalist.

WORKING-CLASS CONSUMPTION PATTERNS

Employment and wages are important indicators of changes in the economic position of the working class. Yet the index which gives the broadest picture of the economic position of the working people is that for the level and pattern of their consumption.

In the post-war period, the total volume of expenditure on goods for personal consumption in the industrially developed capitalist countries grew considerably: by more than 50 per cent in the United States, by 75 per cent in France, by 100 per cent in Italy and almost 200 per cent in Japan.² A reliable reflection of the rise in living standards is provided by the drop in the share of expenditure on food in overall expenditure patterns. In the United States, for instance, expenditure on food in the early 50s accounted for 30 per cent of average personal expenditure on consumer goods, but by the end of the 60s and early 70s food only accounted for 22 per cent; in West Germany, over the same period there was an equivalent drop from 42 to 25 per cent, in France from 42 to 30 per cent, in Italy from 58 to 38.3 per cent and in Japan from 51 to 28.9 per cent (in 1978) and so on.³ All in all, between 1950 and 1980, there was a marked improvement in the range of food products available: consumption of cereals and potatoes dropped (except in Italy), while that of meat, eggs, milk, fruit and sugar increased.

One of the most important features of the evolution of personal consumption in the developed capitalist countries was the growing

¹ *IPW-Berichte*, No. 12, 1974, p. 37.

² *Socio-Economic Problems Facing Working People in Capitalist Countries*, p. 279.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 283; *Rodo tokei chyosa geppo*, No. 3, 1979, p. 50.

use of durable electrical appliances. There was a significant growth in the number of television sets, washing machines, refrigerators, vacuum-cleaners, and electric polishers in private homes. Private means of transport were becoming more and more commonplace. There was an increase in the number of cars, motor-cycles, motor-scooters and bicycles. In the United States, for example, approximately 84 per cent of all families had a car (1974), in Britain 57 per cent (1978), in West Germany 82 per cent and in Japan 55 per cent of workers' families (1979).¹

Rising consumption and changes in its patterns were typical features in the lives of the main bulk of the working people. The social and domestic conditions of their day-to-day lives also underwent substantial changes. Under the impact of the scientific and technological revolution large numbers of new types of goods and services appeared on the market, and these were gradually to become an integral part of the everyday life of the working class.

Yet the proposition put forward by Marx back in 1849 possessed of such fundamental importance still retains its relevance in the present situation: "...Although the enjoyments of the worker have risen, the social satisfaction that they give has fallen in comparison with the increased enjoyments of the capitalist, which are inaccessible to the worker, in comparison with the state of development of society in general. Our desires and pleasures spring from society; we measure them, therefore, by society and not by the objects which serve for their satisfaction."² Average indices for consumption conceal the profound social differences to be observed in the levels and nature of that consumption. Although the range of goods purchased by the proletariat and that purchased by the capitalists coincide to some extent, there are marked differences in the quality and value of the goods bought by the two groups, which fact lends the whole process of consumption a distinctly class-based character.

As before, the lower the level of a family's income, the greater part of the family budget is spent on food, the quality of which is incidentally poorer: in addition, the range of food products is narrower than that which will be found in families with larger incomes. According to one investigation by sampling carried out in Britain at the end of the 60s, in the families of company owners and managers expenditure on food accounted for 22.8 per cent of total outgoings, in the families of white-collar workers for 24.4 per cent and in workers' families 27.8 per cent. The corresponding

¹ *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 1978, p. 474; *Britain*, 1980. *An Official Handbook*, London, 1980, p. 14; *Statistisches Jahrbuch 1980 für die BRD*, 1980, p. 438; *Japan Economic Year Book 1980/81*, Tokyo, 1980, p. 200.

² K. Marx and F. Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 9, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1976, p. 216.

figures for consumer durables were 6.8 per cent, 7.6 per cent and 6.3 per cent.¹

Growth in consumption is uneven in character and does not by any means apply to the working people of different types or to the sales of different consumer items equally. By and large, this growth lagged considerably behind the workers' needs. Whereas in the 19th century consumer needs changed relatively little and relatively slowly during the lifetime of one or even several generations, in the second half of the 20th century, on the other hand, changes in consumer needs are far more rapid.

In the post-war years, there was a certain degree of improvement in medical services and public hygiene and more funds were devoted to both of these. Between 1950 and 1970, total expenditure on health care (in constant prices) rose by 400 per cent in Italy, by 260 per cent in France, 150 per cent in the United States and Sweden, and 100 per cent in West Germany and Belgium.² In those years the share of this expenditure in the United States' GNP grew from 4.6 to 7 per cent.³ The working people began turning more and more frequently to the services of doctors in connection with chronic diseases, whereas before they had only turned to them in acute cases of illness or after accidents.

However, throughout this whole period, proper and comprehensive medical care remained virtually out of reach for a significant sector of the population. This can be explained above all by the high prices of such care. In many countries, the cost of medical care rose more quickly than the prices for many other types of consumer goods and services. In the United States, for example, the consumer price index was 123.0 in 1960 (taking the 1950 figure as 100), 131.1 in 1965, 160.3 in 1970 and 249 in 1977, while the index for prices in the spheres of medical care and public transport in 1977 was 373.⁴ The cost of hospitalisation rose particularly rapidly. During the 60s, for example, the cost of a ten-day stay in a New York hospital almost doubled. There was an acute shortage of medical and paramedical personnel, and medical establishments. In the mid-60s there was a shortfall of about one million hospital beds.

Under capitalism, medical care is shaped by social factors and considerations, the quality of care provided being selective. As a result the most serious illnesses are concentrated in the areas inhabited by the poorest sections of the population. It is revealing to

¹ Figures taken from: *Family Expenditure Survey. Report for 1969*, London, 1970, pp. 54, 56, 58, 60.

² *Socio-Economic Problems Facing Working People in Capitalist Countries*, p. 298.

³ *Statistical Abstract of the United States. 1971*, p. 62.

⁴ *Statistical Abstract of the United States. 1977*, p. 478.

note that in the United States, at the end of the 60s in families with an income of below two thousand dollars a year, every third person was suffering from a chronic illness, as opposed to every 13th in families with an annual income of over seven thousand dollars.

Another acute problem facing the working people is that of housing, although in the 50s and 60s new housing was going up on a relatively wide scale. Particularly important for the working class was the construction of houses belonging to local authorities that contained cheap flats, more or less within their means: this applied in particular to the working class in the countries of Western Europe (especially France, Italy, Britain, Belgium and others). In the 70s, however, there was a gradual scaling down of new housing to be observed.

A similar situation was taking shape in the United States. While in the 50s the number of accommodation units had grown by 26.8 per cent, in the 60s it had risen by only 17.7 per cent. In the Economic Report of the President it was noted: "The level of new housing construction was relatively low in the 1960s, particularly in the second half of the decade, when credit conditions were generally unfavourable for housing."¹

All in all, housing construction proceeded at an uneven rate, usually failing to keep up with the growth of population and for this reason it could not put an end to the housing shortage. In all capitalist countries, rents were growing rapidly and had come to account for between six and sixteen per cent of all expenditure on personal consumption. In 1970, payment for accommodation had increased in comparison with the 1950 figures in Britain, Sweden and Belgium by 50 per cent, in the United States, Japan and West Germany by 100 per cent and in Italy by more than 300 per cent. As a result a paradoxical situation developed—at a time when there was an acute housing shortage, many flats and whole houses were standing empty. In the United States, for example, during the 50s the share of vacant houses and flats in the total housing stock came to an average of 2.7 per cent, to 3.2 per cent in the 60s and to 5.7 per cent in the 70s.²

A considerable number of houses were falling into a dangerous state of disrepair and many were lacking in basic amenities. In one of the White Papers issued by the British conservative government (1971) it was stated that "millions of our 'fellow citizens' still face acute housing problems, there being nearly two million slums and

¹ *Economic Report of the President. 1973, p. 22.*

² *Statistical Abstract of the United States. 1976, p. 741; Economic Report of the President. 1973, p. 23.*

another two million homes without such essentials as bathrooms or indoor sanitation".¹

Naturally, the higher a family's income, the more amenities their accommodation will possess. In France, for example, in 1968 the proportion of families with their own bath or shower was 91.5 per cent among highly placed civil servants, 77.3 per cent among those of middle rank, 59.4 per cent among low-paid civil servants or white-collar workers and 47.7 per cent among workers; the corresponding figures for the same groups with regard to running water in their accommodation were 99.6, 98.6, 96.8, 92.4 per cent; lastly, the corresponding figures for the same groups for those who had a toilet within their accommodation were—91.5, 79.2, 65.1 and 52.3 per cent.²

Yet in the final analysis the predominant tendency of the post-war period was for a rise in the personal consumption of the working class. It plays an increasing role in economic, scientific and technical development. First and foremost, the socio-economic gains of the working class achieved in the course of resolute struggle made possible the increase in the capacity of the domestic market, which in its turn proved an important precondition for the acceleration of economic development. The changes observed above in the patterns, standards and volume of consumption on the part of the working people did a good deal to promote the extension and consolidation of two-way links between production and consumption. This meant that the class struggle of the proletariat acquired tremendous significance among the other factors which exerted a direct or indirect influence upon modern capitalist reproduction and upon its cyclical development.

In conditions where the overwhelming majority—on average over 80 per cent—of the active population in the industrially developed capitalist countries began to consist of hired workers, wages form the main part of the population's personal income. In 1977, for example, in Britain wages constituted 72 per cent of total family incomes.³ In the United States, in the population's personal incomes "income from hired labour" came to 70.7 per cent as opposed to 66.1 per cent in 1950, and 63.9 per cent in 1939.⁴ For this reason personal consumption and at the same time the capacity of the home market for consumer goods and services became bound up with the level of the hired workers' purchasing power.

The working class was and remains the main productive force of

¹ *Management Today*, January 1972, pp. 77-78.

² *Economie et statistique*, No. 13, 1970, p. 62.

³ *Social Trends*, 1979, p. 160.

⁴ Calculated on the basis of figures from: *Economic Report of the President*, 1973, p. 214; *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 1979, p. 443.

society, the main producer of material values. The growth of wages and thus the personal consumption of the working people, and the expansion of the home market also provide the essential condition for economic growth and the implementation of the achievements of the scientific and technological revolution. The working class has turned into the main consumer of mass-produced consumer goods.

Yet despite increases in wages and consumption, the material living and working conditions of the working class continue to be unreliable and insecure and to a large extent to be dependent on haphazard economic processes over which the working people have no control, and also on the arbitrary behaviour of the capitalists. The objective need to increase consumption by the working people, increase wages and social allowances is checked by the lack of stable employment, by unemployment, and state-monopolistic income policies. Increased taxation and spiralling inflation have a decidedly negative effect upon the patterns, volume and structure of consumption. It is precisely this increased taxation and inflation that maintain and exacerbate the contradiction inherent in the capitalist mode of production—that between the need to expand it and the endeavour on the part of the entrepreneurs to hold back wages at a level quite incompatible with the growing needs whose satisfaction serves to reproduce labour power. In other words, the contradiction between the economic aims of capitalist production—the maximisation of profits—and the objective interests of society's development, which find expression in the need ever more fully to satisfy the material and cultural needs of the working people, becomes progressively acute.

The gulf between the growing importance of the working class as producer and consumer and the social conditions of his existence is maintained and widens. This fact is even acknowledged by certain bourgeois writers. The American sociologist Michael Harrington, for example, points out that although ever since Marx's time workers' wages have been increasing, measures are adopted to smooth over the vicissitudes of economic cycles and insurance against unemployment is available, certain traits of the life of the "old" working class still exist: the worker still enjoys few rights, his role in the labour process is still a faceless one and he is more likely to be made redundant than members of other social groups.¹ Harrington criticises the theory regarding the "embourgeoisement" of the working class: "In the United States as in England the worker is not an integrated participant in affluence—but a member of a quite distinct stratum. And this stratum, for the most part, is nei-

¹ M. Harrington, "Old Working Class, New Working Class" in *Dissent*, Winter 1972, p. 150.

ther poor nor modestly well off, indeed is better off than ever before—yet still quite deprived.”¹

Not only in capitalist society as a whole but also within each individual enterprise, the contradiction makes itself clearly felt between the role of the working class in production and its lack of any opportunities for participating in decision-making, or coming forward with any initiative or creative ideas.

The growing disparity between the role of the working class in the economic development of the capitalist countries and its actual position, when it is deprived of so many rights within the system of production, is one of the most powerful motives behind the class struggle in the era of the scientific and technological revolution. Awareness of this disparity has given additional stimulus to the decision of all these questions, in the control of the economic and social processes at all levels.

METHODS OF CAPITALIST EXPLOITATION AND WORKING-CLASS CONDITIONS

An analysis of the various features of the process of capitalist exploitation is of crucial importance for an understanding of the regularities underlying the formation of the working class as a revolutionary force. Marxist-Leninist writers have never regarded this process as something unchanging or stagnant. They start out from the fact that the forms and methods of exploitation are modified in keeping with the conditions of capitalist reproduction, with the development of technology and the organisation of production and changes in the correlation of class forces. A particularly large number of changes are to be observed in the present period when productive forces make enormous progress and the world revolutionary process is being deepened, when new traits appear in the development of the general crisis of capitalism.

The scientific and technological revolution created for monopoly capital additional opportunities for intensifying the exploitation of the working class. It has accelerated the rise in labour productivity which in capitalist production provides a means of increasing surplus working time by reducing necessary working time. Modern capitalist exploitation is coming to be based more and more on the use of complex labour. This enables the monopolies to derive higher norms of surplus-value even when the price and value of labour power rises.

In recent decades, the growth in the amount of one worker's hourly output in a number of capitalist countries and branch of in-

¹ M. Harrington, "Old Working Class, New Working Class", *op. cit.*, p. 150.

dustry has been possible largely thanks to intensification of labour. This phenomenon, bound up first and foremost with the accelerated rate of work, has been termed "rationalisation without investment".

The capitalists are reaping extra profits through the extension of working time as well. The reduction of the average working week that has been recorded over recent decades in the statistics of a number of countries has been achieved in part thanks to the inclusion in the economically active population of a large proportion of women and students who do not work a full week. The length of the average working week for men—the largest group within the economically active population—is only being slightly reduced and sometimes even reveals a tendency to become longer. In all capitalist countries, there is a noticeable gap between its official length (laid down legally or recorded in a collective agreement) and its actual one. Overtime work, working at holiday time or at weekends have become widespread practices.

As a result in the United States where the normal working week is 40 hours, in 1977 industrial workers on average worked an additional 3.7 hours overtime a week. In France, the average working week in practice was 42.5 hours, in Britain 41.8 and in Italy 41.4.¹

New schemes introduced in a number of advanced capitalist countries for arranging working hours ("flexi-time" involving a four-day working week with ten hours work each day) have not brought about a reduction in the overall length of working hours. Yet they often go hand in hand with intensification of labour.

Side by side with these more or less "traditional" methods for intensifying exploitation such as increasing the pace of work or lengthening working time, ever wide use is being made, under the impact of the scientific and technological revolution, of relatively new methods for adapting the working conditions of workers, methods bound up with the automation of production. Automation has an ambivalent and contradictory effect upon working conditions. On the one hand, it cuts down to some extent the physical effect required of workers, the muscular exertion. Being technologically progressive, automated production requires more than ever good safety precautions and greater cleanliness in the factory where conditions are more aesthetically pleasing and more account is taken of the psychological factors involved in the work process. Higher standards of production, the emotional state of the employee, his capacity for heightened concentration and attentiveness become important factors vital to the normal running of the production process. These objective demands of technological progress have to be taken into account in capitalist production and have had some effect upon the evolution of the working conditions for the workers.

¹ *Labor Today*, October 1978, p. 3.

On the other hand, the endeavour of the monopolies to increase in every way possible the intensity of complex labour processes leads to a drastic increase in the nervous and psychological tension in the working people's labour. It is as a result of this that new types of work-induced ailments are becoming more and more widespread, including nervous, psychological and cardiovascular diseases, which to a large extent are the result of the working environment. These and other types of work-induced diseases and accidents are widespread in the spheres of the economy involving monotonous work, packing operations or operations that are detrimental to health (where workers are exposed to above-average radiation or high-frequency currents and toxic substances, etc.).¹

In many factories, above all small and medium-sized ones, old forms and methods of exploitation still predominate. This applies in particular to Japan and Italy. In Japan, for example, owners of factories employing up to ten people are not obliged to observe the normal "conditions of hire" that specify statutory working conditions. Usually the workers in these small-scale enterprises are not unionised: their wages are far lower than those paid out in medium-size enterprises or in particular in the large-scale enterprises. Yet it should not be forgotten that in Japan according to official statistics in 1972, over 38 per cent of all those with permanent employment² were working in small-scale enterprises (employing between 1 and 29 people) in all branches of the economy, including agriculture, although the majority were in the retail and services sector.

In keeping with the traditional conditions of hire those who are working in small-size or even medium-scale enterprises do not have the chance to move over into a large-scale enterprise where wages are higher, working conditions better and there is the chance to avail themselves of social welfare and to raise their vocational skills. Those dismissed from a large-scale enterprise can only seek work in a small one. In today's conditions of fierce competition those employed in small-scale enterprises, where technology is primitive, are obliged to work with maximum intensity in the environment where there is no official limit to working hours and where essential safety requirements are not observed. As a result it means that the smaller the enterprises, the higher the level of work-induced accidents. According to the data on medium-scale enterprises in Japan's processing industries (employing between 30 and 49 people) the number of accidents is nine and a half times higher than in the giant enterprises (employing over a thousand people).³

¹ *International Labour Review*, No. 4, 1978, p. 409.

² Figures from *Rodo tokei yoran 1976*, Tokyo, 1976, p. 32.

³ *Rodo tokei chyosa geppo*, No. 7, 1976, p. 23.

In Italy, work carried out in the home is widespread and this is subject to inspection neither by the state nor by the trade unions. Although a law was passed as far back as 1958 specifying working conditions for home-based employees and extending to them the piece-rate systems, social benefits and pensions enjoyed elsewhere, these conditions were not fulfilled, since the law required of employers and home-based workers that they register and it was not in the interests of the former. There is no precise information available as to the number of home-based workers, but according to some estimates the figure is around the million mark and the vast majority of such employees are women. Surveys conducted in a number of regions of Italy have shown that in Lombardy alone almost 15 per cent of those employed in industry (230,000 people) are home-based workers. In Emilia, Tuscany, Campagna and Apulia, the proportion of these workers is higher still: in some parts of Emilia they account for up to 50 per cent of the total work force in industry. Home-based work is most widespread in the textile, garment-making and shoe-making industries and also in the wood-processing and ceramics industries and even in mechanical engineering. This work is carried out with the help of simple but fairly modern machinery and the simplest operations involved in assembling various small machines are more often than not carried out by hand.¹ In addition to home-based employment of the traditional type, other forms have been developing in Italy, such as the setting up of small laboratories or subsidiary workshops affiliated to large-scale enterprises, in which nevertheless work is carried out either with simple, unsophisticated equipment or by hand.

Home-based employment in all its forms is particularly advantageous for entrepreneurs, since they can make substantial "economies" on payment of taxes, social insurance contributions and wages, which only come to between 50 and 70 per cent, on average, of those earned by workers in ordinary plants and factories.²

One or other combination of old and new forms of extracting surplus-value are typical even for the most modern of enterprises where, side by side with automated production lines, are to be found sections and sometimes even whole workshops with obsolete methods of production, involving the most blatant forms of exploitation, unabashed "day-light robbery" in relation to the work force.

In spheres where the scientific and technological revolution is making an impact and there have been some innovations in the organisation of labour within capitalist production, this does not imply by any means that unhealthy working conditions have been done

¹ *Rinascita*, May 4, 1973, pp. 6, 7.

² *Ibid.*

away with, the high pace of work operations has been decreased or inadequate safety regulations have been amended. The determination of capitalists to "economise" with regard to protection of labour remains one of the ways in which exploitation of hired workers is intensified. At the same time the scientific and technological revolution has brought in its wake changes in the intensity of labour.

Intensification of labour made possible by workers expending more nervous energy accelerates the undermining of the work force's health, demands more substantial expenditure on restoring workers' capacity for work, than when greater muscular effort is made. This kind of labour intensification is typical not only for the industrial proletariat, but it also affects office workers, engineering and technical personnel and those employed in scientific establishments, as a result of the vastly increased volume of information requiring processing.

The intensification of labour, as pointed out earlier, constitutes one of the main causes of work-induced accidents. The proportion of those suffering from such accidents is 2.8 per cent of the work force in the USA, 7.1 per cent in France, 10.4 per cent in West Germany, 6.2 per cent in Italy and 1.7 per cent in Japan (average annual figures).¹

American industry serves as an example to illustrate just how firmly the predatory attitude to the work force has taken root. In April 1970, the Occupational Safety and Health Act came into force in the wake of constant violations of safety regulations in industry and numerous protests from workers. After the level of protection for workers against dangerous, yet very widespread substances used in production had been investigated by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (in the Department of Labor), which included asbestos, lead, silicon, cotton dust and carbon dioxide—it emerged that several million workers were in constant contact with these substances and that they were inadequately protected against their harmful effects, particularly so in small-scale enterprises. The entrepreneurs fought the new law tooth and nail; some of them declared that they would need many years and millions of dollars to implement the new safety norms and they drew attention to the required expenditure outside their means; in the long run only a small number of company directors took the 1970 law seriously.

The intensification of exploitation also comes up against increas-

¹ Figures from: *The International Labour Movement, 1970*, p. 144; *Socio-Economic Problems Facing Working People in Capitalist Countries*, p. 16.

ingly widespread resistance from the working people, higher levels of working-class organisation and workers' heightened awareness of their own role in production. New social conditions that have taken shape under the influence of the class struggle of the working people and the advance of the scientific and technological revolution have changed to a large extent the social and psychological image of the working class. The emergence of a new type of worker, generally more educated and highly skilled than his predecessors, with a broad outlook and growing needs obliges the capitalists to improve forms and methods of exploitation. The process of exploitation, particularly in immediate production, had for this reason to undergo certain modifications (paternalism, "human relations", "job enrichment", etc.). The increasing attempts to mask exploitation began to find expression in the search for new forms of labour organisation designed to encourage workers' creative attitude to their work, responsibility and a certain degree of independent decision-making for the workers as one of the essential elements in the production process. In other words, entrepreneurs were faced with the task, alien to the spirit of capitalist production, of reducing workers' "alienation" and promoting moral labour incentives.

The scientific and technological revolution has given rise to a restructuring of modern industry in which the various stages and elements in the production process are far more closely linked together than before. At a time when ever wider use is being made of new, complex and expensive equipment and computers, the smooth uninterrupted running of the production process is crucial; in a number of branches of industry interruptions of production or negligent attitudes to equipment can incur most substantial losses. If the capitalists are to utilise all the achievements of the scientific and technological revolution to their advantage, they require not only a work force that has been given an up-to-date training, is highly disciplined and turns in high-quality work, but also one that has a vested interest in the work itself, so that not only material but also moral incentives for labour activity have to be provided.

In improving the forms and methods of exploitation of the working class bourgeois experts start out chiefly from the requirements of capitalist production, from the entrepreneurs' endeavour to extract the maximum possible profit from production. At the same time they are obliged more and more frequently to take into consideration those changes that have taken place during the period 1950-1980 within the actual object of this exploitation, changes in the nature of the work force, its qualities, attitudes, value judgements with regard to its labour, and so on.

Various forms of disconnected, monotonous and uninteresting

work that are widespread in capitalist production are proving increasingly intolerable as workers achieve higher levels of education and culture. Workers' growing dissatisfaction with disconnected work operations, particularly on the assembly-line in the late 60s and early 70s assumed a form and momentum that constituted a dangerous threat to the very functioning of capitalist production. This was borne out by the growing scale of strike action providing an outlet for workers' protests against methods of exploitation linked with this kind of labour (strikes at General Motors in Lordstown, and at the Renault plant in Le Mans in 1972, etc.).

The scale that another somewhat unusual manifestation of protest assumed, also stemming from dissatisfaction with working conditions—absenteeism—can be illustrated with reference to the Fiat works in Turin. The percentage of lost working days went up from 4 in 1960 to 8 in 1970 and reached almost 15 in 1972. Every morning at the Turin plant between 13,000 and 15,000 workers did not turn up for work and after public holidays between 30 and 40 per cent of the work force might fail to put in an appearance. This resulted in a drop in the production of cars by 200 units a day.¹

In the light of acts such as these it has become increasingly clear that the methods of Taylor and Ford are "morally obsolete", based as they are on unabashed coercion, breaking down work operations into the smallest possible component elements and attempts to disunite the work force. They are based on the assumption that unions should be banned or at least that they will not be allowed to operate in industrial enterprises and that workers will be kept quite separate from all aspects of management. Much that is contained in these principles still remains attractive for capitalists but can no longer be applied within the context of today's production.

From as far back as the 30s and up until the early 60s wide use was made of methods combining material and moral incentives so as to improve productivity and intensity of labour. "Human relations" became the popular slogan; their tactics took into account socio-psychological factors so as to achieve more effective control of the work force in the production sphere. This involved a change in the forms of inspection of work operations and in the outward style of management's attitude to the worker (demonstrations of "attentiveness" and "respect" for him, polite forms of address and moral encouragement for achievements in the labour process. Yet these "human relations" tactics could not conceal the exploitation of workers with-

¹ *L'Usine Nouvelle*, September 1, 1973, No. 35, p. 48.

in the capitalist enterprise and the material concessions, which the capitalists were obliged to make under pressure from the labour movement, failed to alleviate acute class antagonisms.

Bourgeois experts in the organisation of labour began to elaborate measures for the reorganisation of conveyor-belt and assembly-line production and certain other types of particularly tiring work. Methods under the heading "humanisation of labour" designed to put an end to the fragmentation of labour operations and restructuring certain organisational forms of production processes were being introduced so as to make labour less monotonous and to stimulate more active initiative on the part of the worker. At a factory for the production of synthetic fibres in Gloucester that belonged to the leading British firm Imperial Chemical Industries Limited, groups of eight people headed by a foreman and senior worker were set up in each workshop. This group of workers set their own norms, and it was allegedly in the interests of every worker to help his fellow-workers in his group whenever necessary; virtually all the control of the quality of work and the maintenance of labour discipline became the responsibility of the group. Changes in forms of labour paved the way towards more flexible and adaptable utilisation of the work force. Workers' wages were increased by an average of 25 per cent and they began to receive full payment for days lost through sickness. As a result there was a considerable rise in productivity and the number of employees was reduced by 20 per cent. Furthermore, a considerable economy was made in view of the now reduced expenditure on supervision or inspection of employees' work.¹ Since the late 60s and early 70s similar experiments were introduced in other branches of industry, in particular at the Volvo and Saab motor plants in Sweden, at Fiat-Mirafiori and Montecatini in Italy, the Renault works in France, etc.²

Within the context of capitalist production the functioning of which is geared towards the securing of profit, similar changes in forms of labour organisation reflect the endeavour on the monopolies' part to adapt methods used for the exploitation of workers to conditions obtaining in modern production and the current correlation of class forces. They inevitably acquire the character of socio-democratic measures aimed at developing class collaboration and the ideological and psychological subordination of the working people to the ruling class. At the same time they provide a vivid illustration of the incompatibility of the relations inherent in capitalist exploitation, on the one hand, with the objective trends to be observed in

¹ *The Director*, September 1970, pp. 420-422, 424, 426.

² Y. Delamotte, *Recherches en vue d'une organisation plus humaine du travail industriel*, Paris, 1972.

the organisation of labour that are born of the scientific and technological revolution, on the other hand. These trends must of necessity bring in their wake increasing involvement of the working people in tackling production issues. Yet involvement of this type is something quite unacceptable for the bourgeoisie, since it undermines its power and freedom to exploit the work force at will. For precisely this reason the development of such trends under capitalism can only be of a limited nature and can only be permitted in degrees and forms that still make possible the consolidation of the system of exploitation.

Chapter 6

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY OF THE WORKING CLASS

The first thirty years after the Second World War were marked by major changes in the consciousness and the whole psychological outlook of the working class in the capitalist countries. This process developed under the direct influence of the changes in the position and structure of the working class, in the nature of labour and the way of life. At the same time the process was stimulated by the recent historical experience of the proletariat, by changes in the world and in individual capitalist countries which had left their mark on the consciousness of the masses. The ideological, political and organisational activity of the Communist parties, on the one hand, and the psychological consequences of the evolution of the proletarian masses and the development of their socio-political consciousness, on the other hand, were important factors shaping the course of the labour movement and the level and direction of the workers' class struggle.

As far back as the eve of the first Russian revolution, Lenin pointed out that each of the transitional stages in the development of the revolutionary movement in Russia "...was prepared, on the one hand, by socialist thought ... and on the other, by the profound changes that had taken place in the conditions of life and in the whole mentality of the working class".¹

The effect of the factors in the development of the labour movement noted by Lenin came more and more clearly to the fore in the conditions of post-war capitalist society. First of all, this was because in the escalating ideological struggle resulting from the confrontation of socialism and capitalism in the world arena, the bourgeois ideologists were striving harder than ever before to influence the minds of the working people. The future prospects for the development of the labour movement and its chances of putting

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 8, 1974, p. 211.

a stop to the tendency to become integrated into bourgeois society depended on "socialist thought", on whether or not the bourgeois ideologists could give convincing, well-substantiated and well-timed answers to the questions being asked by the working class. Secondly, the rapidly increasing pace and scale of change in the living conditions, mentality and the resultant accelerated emergence of new needs, motives and conceptions of the working masses were the source of greater dynamism in the labour movement, a renovation of its immediate goals, demands and methods of action.

Developing as it was to a significant degree under the influence of changes in the proletariat's style of thinking, the class struggle of the working class in its turn had a major impact upon that style of thinking. Thus, changes in the proletariat's mass consciousness are not in any way something that is separate from the history of the mass labour movement, or from the struggle of its various trends.

The development of the class consciousness of the proletariat and the transformation of the proletariat from "a class in itself" into "the class for itself" is not a straightforward process. The historical experience of the labour movement has shown that in capitalist society there are advances in the class consciousness of the proletariat to be observed but also certain setbacks in that development. This stems from the powerful influence exerted by bourgeois ideology on the working class and also from the variable nature of its social existence. The development of capitalism and the struggle of the working class itself again and again confront it with new problems and call forth new attitudes within this social milieu. For this reason at each new stage of the socio-historical process the working class needs to elaborate its conceptions of the world, appreciate where its interests lie, bearing in mind the changing conditions in its immediate environment. Inevitable difficulties in attempts to come to terms with new historical experience can for a time hold back the advance of the proletarian masses' class consciousness.

THE IMPACT OF THE POST-WAR SOCIO-POLITICAL SITUATION ON THE MASS CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE WORKING CLASS

The early post-war years saw tremendous growth in the authority of the socialist system stemming from the decisive contribution that the USSR had made to the rout of German fascism and Japanese militarism. This period was also marked by popular-democratic and national liberation revolutions in a number of countries, and by an all-embracing enthusiasm for democratic ideas in the capitalist world. Both of these developments furthered the advance and enrichment

of proletarian consciousness and served to activate revolutionary trends in the mass consciousness of the working class. The level and forms of the manifestation of these trends were far from identical from one country or region to another. In Western Europe, particularly in those quarters where the democratic movement had developed directly from the anti-fascist liberation struggle led by the working class, it often reached an almost revolutionary pitch: in France, Italy and some other countries, a significant section of the working class was psychologically ready to engage in revolutionary struggle to take power, to implement socialist transformations. In the remaining West European countries and also in Japan the working class was intensifying its political activity and making ever stronger demands for far-reaching democratic reforms. In countries that had been far less affected by the upheavals of the war years and which had not passed through the stage of mass-scale anti-fascist struggle, the above trends were less marked. Yet the fight against and victory over fascism had fostered the political enlightenment of the working class everywhere and created a psychological atmosphere in which everyone was expecting big progressive changes in the life of society. Almost overnight the more militant sections of the labour movement had acquired new authority and Communist parties were enjoying more influence among the masses. Democratic reforms introduced in many countries after the Second World War enhanced the faith of the working class in its own strength and in the capacity to bring its influence to bear on socio-political developments.

One of the most important consequences of the anti-fascist liberation struggle was the way it had consolidated democratic ideals, enabling the latter to play a more important role in the consciousness of the mass strata of the working people. In a situation very different from that which had taken shape in the countries of the capitalist West after the First World War, when the working class and other mass strata of society experienced profound disillusionment in the institutions of bourgeois democracy, the masses at this point in time—in the 40s and 50s—saw these institutions as something that had been fought for and defended in the fight against fascism. Furthermore, the experience of the first few years after the war showed that the labour movement could make the most of its democratic rights and freedoms under capitalism as a means to achieve profound social reforms, limit the power of the bourgeoisie and to launch an offensive against the very foundations of the capitalist system. This new role for bourgeois-democratic institutions was reflected in the programmes put forward at this period by Communist parties.

The fact that democratic moods and ideals were taking root in

the mass consciousness of the working class could, and indeed did, provide an important socio-psychological precondition for the transition of the wide strata within that class to active involvement in the fight against the monopolies, for doing away with sectarian inclinations, which divorced the narrow interpretation of the workers' interests from the main problems of socio-political life and isolated the proletariat from its potential allies. Only after absorbing democratic attitudes and ideals could the working class become the leading force in the fight against the monopolies, which under SMC was a vital step in the fight for socialism.

The transition to the cold war and the explosion of anti-communist hysteria which accompanied it, together with the rapidly escalating confrontation between working-class organisations adopting diametrically opposed ideological and political stances served seriously to hold back or distort the development of these socio-psychological trends.

In the very unusual atmosphere of the cold war the growth of the working class' democratic aspirations, and the widening of its social horizons, both of which were important features in the development of proletarian class consciousness, were to be found side by side with other completely opposite trends. Anti-communist propaganda exploited to the full the deep attachment which the masses felt for democratic rights and institutions. One of the main ideas put forward in this propaganda was that there could be nothing in common between communism and democracy and no stone was left unturned in the campaign to instil this idea into the consciousness of the working people, to disorientate certain sections of the working people and to obscure the paths and prospects for the fight for socialism and democracy. At a time when world socialism and the communist movement were enjoying growing influence anti-communist propaganda was aimed at convincing the masses that democracy could only be defended and developed within the context of the capitalist order. Propaganda of this kind aimed both at achieving the political isolation of the Communist parties and frightening the population with the alleged threat of "Soviet expansion" gave rise to a certain stabilisation of the influence exerted by reformist and right-wing bourgeois policies on quite a significant section of the working class.

The political and propaganda activity aimed at undermining the more intense activity of the proletariat was further reinforced—particularly in the 50s—by the socio-economic course pursued by SMC. Measures to stimulate economic growth and promote various "economic miracles", the expansion of mass consumption, the accelerating pace of the scientific and technological revolution, the resorption of mass-scale unemployment in a number of countries

and the advance of social welfare systems were all used by the capitalist political apparatus and parties to bring pressure to bear upon the psychology of the masses. It was precisely at this period that the political course was elaborated aimed at the "social integration" of the working class into capitalism, one of the main elements of which was the slogan of the "consumer society".

The essential aim of this political course was to remould the consciousness of the working people and to promote a new type of citizen for whom the possession of a selection of material goods and benefits accessible to the average mass consumer was the main motive behind his behaviour, leaving no room for any type of social protest or activity in his life. The expansion and enhancement of the worker's standards of material consumption thanks to the mass production of cars, refrigerators, television sets, etc. created the illusion that the working class was "coming up in the world" and distracted its attention from the fundamental problems in its economic and social position.

The same goal was behind the attempts to win over certain strata of the working class—strata that were wider than the traditional workers' aristocracy, first and foremost working people employed in factories belonging to the most powerful monopolies in the most rapidly developing branches of industry that possessed particularly promising opportunities for pursuing a paternalist "high wage policy". As pointed out earlier, social tactics of this sort were closely bound up with attempts to bring deliberate pressure to bear on workers' organisations and to integrate these into the mechanism of state-monopoly regulation, and with the propaganda campaign extolling the virtues of a new role for the state that would allegedly reform class relations.

The psychological effect of this policy and the degree of its real influence on the minds of the working people varied a great deal from one country and one region to another in the capitalist world. To a large extent they were determined by the level and rate of economic development in each country and the material power of monopoly capital (in the United States, for example, and in the former British dominions or in Sweden the required economic preconditions emerged far earlier than in most of the states of Western Europe or Japan). The decisive factors, however, were the actual historical conditions in which the ideological and political development of each detachment of the working class was proceeding, its experience and traditions, the characteristics of the labour movement in each country concerned that had taken shape in the course of its history hitherto.

In the United States, because of the special features of this country the influence of bourgeois ideology on the working class had

always been relatively extensive. The historical circumstances relating to the formation of the American proletariat, that underlay the fragmentation of the population according to ethnic groups, had held back the development of its class consciousness. Apolitical or reactionary trade unionism was predominant in the organised labour movement. For this reason the working class proved most receptive to the values of the "consumer society". The cult of the dollar and individual success, so typical of the American way of life, misled many workers. The place which the American imperialists had come to occupy in the capitalist world of the post-war period, their role in the perpetration of anti-communist policies both inside the country and beyond its borders and finally the limited degree to which the bulk of Americans had been exposed to the events of the anti-fascist democratic struggle, all made it easier for imperialist and chauvinist ideas to take root in their minds, ideas with which they were inundated with the full force of the world's largest bourgeois propaganda machine and system of mass media.

In Western Europe, the Social Democratic parties and the leadership of the reformist trade unions co-operating with them had played a major part in consolidating the influence of bourgeois ideology on the working class. The ideological and psychological consequences of their activity were, naturally, far more obvious in those countries where the bulk of the workers by tradition linked the defence of their interests in the political sphere with the Social Democrats. In these conditions the switch of the Social Democratic leadership to positions of militant anti-communism and anti-Sovietism and the relatively unabashed replacement of socialist aims with support for state-monopoly development led the workers to reconcile themselves with this "new-style" capitalism.

Another factor involved in the influence of bourgeois ideology on the working class, especially its less politically developed sector (Catholic workers, workers who had recently turned their back on rural life, women, etc.) was the prominent position that had been secured by new bourgeois parties in a number of countries in continental Europe, parties such as the Mouvement Républicain Populaire (MRP) and the Rassemblement pour la République (RPR), in France, the Partito Democrazia Cristiana in Italy and the Christlich-Demokratische Union in West Germany. Unlike the parties of the "old" type they had not been compromised by any collaboration with the fascists and they supported certain social reforms in the interests of the working people and numbered among their supporters various "workers'" or "left" groups which had attempted to take into account and reflect in their policy documents the demands of the working class. Characteristic of all these parties was their endeavour to establish links with the mass labour organisa-

tions: the majority of them made wide use of the democratic and anti-capitalist demagoguery of "social Catholicism". Similar tendencies were to be observed in the activity of certain "traditional" bourgeois parties (such as that of the British Conservatives).

While the policy of the Social Democrats held back and distorted the development of the class consciousness of part of the proletariat, which to one extent or another shared socialist ideals and in the situation that had taken shape after the war was able actively to support the fight to have such ideals implemented, bourgeois policy, on the other hand, was aimed directly at holding back the rising tide of anti-capitalist feeling among the more backward sections of the working class.

The psychological effect of bourgeois and social-democratic policies and propaganda in the majority of West European countries and Japan grew stronger in some degree or other as a result of the relatively rapid transition from the hungry war and post-war years to the consumption boom, and in many of these countries to a certain degree of material prosperity. The most graphic example of this was provided by West Germany, where, as pointed out in 1969 by the then Chairman of the German Communist Party, Kurt Bachmann: "The integration of the working people [into the capitalist system—*Ed.*]... has proceeded further than in any other West European state."¹ Apart from the factors mentioned above, something else that came into play here as well was the aftermath of twelve years of Hitlerite domination that had deprived a whole generation of the working class of the opportunity to have passed on to it proletarian traditions and class ideology, and also the fanning of revanchist sentiments and hostility towards the German Democratic Republic. As was revealed in the findings of some detailed surveys, false conceptions of blurred class differences, of the opportunity to be enjoyed by every working man under the existing order to secure fair wages and to acquire property to the effect that the "free enterprise" system was best designed to ensure prosperity for the working people were propagated during the 50s among the relatively wide strata of the West German workers.

In this connection it is essential to point out once more that the decisive preconditions for the propagation of such views among workers were not so much objective economic and social processes (although their importance is self-evident), as subjective factors—insufficient political experience of the masses themselves and the ideological and political complexion of the organised labour movement.

¹ K. Bachmann, "Die Deutsche Kommunistische Partei nach dem Essener Parteitag", in *Marxistische Blätter*, No. 4, 1969, p. 41.

A rather different situation took shape in countries where during the war and in the first post-war years the working class began to lead a mass democratic struggle, where Communist parties had secured the dominant position in the labour movement during that period. Here the impact of the social tactics employed by SMC on the minds of the working people proved infinitely smaller.

This applies first of all to France and Italy. In France, after two decades of intensive anti-communist propaganda, combined with a variety of measures aimed at the "integration" and splitting of the working class and at re-educating it in a spirit of "consumer society" ideals etc., the Communist Party remained the party representing the working class more than any other and socialist ideology retained its firm influence among the workers. In accordance with a survey conducted in 1966, 53 per cent of the French workers regarded the French Communist Party as the champion of the interests of the working class, 35 per cent intended to vote for it at the next election and 30 per cent considered that the establishment of a "communist regime" in the country would be in their interest.¹ In Italy, surveys showed that in the 60s approximately 40 per cent of workers voted for the Communists.² In these countries class-based trade unions (the CGT in France and the CGIL in Italy) during the whole of the period under discussion were the most authoritative and representative professional organisations of the working people. Typical of the political climate in these two countries was the fact that in both countries the Communist parties enjoyed the most widespread and deep-rooted influence in regions where technically advanced large-scale industry was established, in which the most skilled and best paid detachments of the industrial proletariat were concentrated (the Paris and Marseilles regions in France and the Milan-Turin-Genoa triangle in Italy). This fact demonstrated that the calculations of the bourgeois politicians, who had been counting on the fact that the reduction in material poverty and the rise in workers' cultural levels would automatically undermine the influence of revolutionary ideas, were ill-founded.

While drawing attention to the considerable ideological and psychological differences to be found in the development of the various national detachments of the working class, it would not be right at the same time to lay too much emphasis on these differences. Even in those countries where the least favourable conditions took shape after the war for the advance of the proletariat's class consciousness, the influence of bourgeois ideas and attitudes proved incapable of

¹ *Cahiers du communisme*, No. 1, 1968, pp. 37, 42; No. 12, 1967, p. 66.

² J. Meynaud, *Les partis politiques en Italie*, Paris, 1965, p. 94; Mattei Dogan, "Comportement politique et condition sociale en Italie", in *Revue française de Sociologie*, Vol. VII, Numero spécial, 1966, p. 714.

eroding its foundations. In the 50s, many bourgeois and reformist ideologists and politicians were inclined to take seriously the prospect that "social integration" might be entirely successful. The relative lull in the militant activity of the working class in a number of countries, the drawing of various reformist trade unions into certain forms of class collaboration were interpreted as a reflection of the ongoing process of the embourgeoisement of workers' attitudes. Events were soon to shatter these illusions. The gathering momentum of the mass strike movement in the majority of capitalist countries, the spread of "wild-cat" strikes reflecting the profound discontentment of the rank-and-file workers with the compromise tactics of the trade union bureaucracy showed that the proletarian mass was far removed from the acceptance of its position that had been attributed to it. Later the 60s would be acknowledged as the time of crisis for that system of industrial relations which had seemed so firmly established the decade before. All even remotely serious and thorough investigations of workers' attitudes that were undertaken in various capitalist countries bore witness to the fact that embourgeoisement was not taking place.¹

Both in the 50s and 60s an awareness of class differences and class inequality was to be found among the wide strata of the proletariat, who understood the need to defend their interests in the fight against the entrepreneurs. It goes without saying that in every country there were to be found within the working class various different, at times opposed, ideas and attitudes, the balance of which could vary from one period to another. Under the impact of changes in living conditions and of bourgeois propaganda some sections of the working class were inclined to believe in the possibility of their class' "social progress" within the framework of capitalism and to share the ideas of those who supported class collaboration. Moods of this kind were most common among the working people in those enterprises and branches of industry, in which, because of the increased demand for labour, the rate of wage increases was above average; some workers who had recently come into industry after working on the land or being part of the petty bourgeoisie also fell prey to these moods. The bulk of the industrial proletariat, however, did not share any such illusions. Even in the United States, the majority of workers understood that the corporations and big

¹ S. M. Miller, F. Riessman, "The Working Class Subculture: A New View," in the journal *Class and Personality in Society*, New York, 1969, pp. 99-117; John H. Goldthorpe and others, *The Affluent Worker in the Class Structure*, Cambridge, 1969; B. M. Berger, *Working-Class Suburb*, Berkeley, 1960; A. Levison, *The Working-Class Majority*, New York, 1975; R. Parker, *The Myth of the Middle Class*, New York, 1972; M. Fried, *The World of the Urban Working Class*, Cambridge, 1973.

business as a whole were exploiting them and that the main aim of the business world was to secure more and more profit; they realised that it is precisely the world of business that unleashes wars, buys the co-operation of judges and congressmen and obliges the government to comply with its diktat.¹ In other countries, where anti-capitalist traditions among the working class were stronger, these convictions were far more widespread.

Despite all changes in the social tactics of the capitalists and in the level and structure of mass consumption, everyday experience of relations in production continued to convince the workers that their interests and the interests of the capitalist property owners were fundamentally opposed to each other and that there was a need for organised struggle if they were to raise their living standards and improve their working conditions.

It proved far harder for many workers to appreciate the opportunities and prospects for the fundamental restructuring of society, for the enhancement of the role their class might play in political life, and to appreciate the true nature not only of their material interests, but also of their broader socio-political interests.

A number of factors made the appreciation of these opportunities and interests difficult. They were linked in no small degree with the increasing complexity of social life. While for the bulk of the working class its position was associated first and foremost with material poverty and an excessive burden of work, the blame for this hardship could be epitomised in the all too visible, easily recognised figure of the capitalist exploiter, and the expropriation of the capitalist class could be envisaged in the general and clear terms of social liberation. When, however, on the one hand, their personal experience began to convince more and more workers that the reduction of the scale of poverty was by no means tantamount to the elimination of exploitation, and on the other hand, the very system of exploitation, thanks to the development of the capitalist administrative apparatus, had assumed an outwardly "anonymous", faceless character, it became more difficult for the rank-and-file worker to appreciate the specific aims of the revolutionary struggle and to single out his class enemies. Increasing complexity of industrial and social organisation, the growing importance in management of specialised knowledge and the social groups which possessed it created for the ideologists of the ruling class additional opportunities to introduce to the consciousness of the masses the false idea that class differences were shaped by the inexorable demands of modern technology and the division of labour. In this

¹ L. Lipsitz, "Work Life and Political Attitudes", in: *The White Majority. Between Poverty and Affluence*, New York, 1970, p. 160.

way exploitation and social oppression were divorced from their class, capitalist basis and every effort was made to convince workers that socialist aspirations and ideals could not be implemented and that the struggle to fulfil them was a senseless one.

Negative aspects of the policies pursued by leaders of Social Democratic parties and reformist trade unions were also to have a considerable influence upon the socio-political consciousness of the proletariat. With each passing day workers in many capitalist countries came to realise that those organisations which they had come over the years to regard as the vehicles for the defence of their interests, not only were failing to pursue class-based policies fundamentally different from the policies of the ruling class, but were often adapting their line to converge more closely with a state-monopolist course. Those sections of the working people (fairly considerable in most of the capitalist countries), who were not receiving reliable information as to the truly revolutionary essence of Marxist-Leninist policies, began to lose faith in the possibility of a radical alternative to reformism, in the capacity of the labour movement to put forward such an alternative and to fight for it. The notion that the working class was politically weak made more likely the split within the labour movement both on an international scale and within a number of countries.

All this brought forth a psychological atmosphere among certain strata of the working class that produced a kind of social pessimism and, stemming directly from the latter, political apathy, a view of politics as something "dirty" and far removed from the concerns of the working man: it led the most backward sections of the working class to support bourgeois parties. Many of these who did not believe in any opportunity for the proletariat to bring its influence forcefully to bear on political life sought a solution in basing their activities on the "knowledge" and "experience" of bourgeois politicians. A special role in this situation was played by the broadening socio-economic functions of the bourgeois state and its propaganda, which sought to persuade the masses that only "competent specialists" from the ruling class were capable of managing the economy and society.

During the elections in the 50s and 60s no less than a third of the workers in countries such as Britain, Italy, and France voted for bourgeois parties.¹ The absence of any clear political perspective, making it difficult to understand the links between working-class interests and the political struggle gave rise to a situation in

¹ *Socio-Political Changes in the Countries of Advanced Capitalism*, Moscow, 1971, p. 266; N. M. Stepanova, *The Conservative Party and the Working Class in Post-War Britain*, Moscow, 1972, p. 30 (both in Russian).

which part of the working class behaved in a passive way, even when their socio-economic gains were under immediate threat. A typical instance of this was to be found in the events of 1958 in France: weariness and disillusion resulting from the split in the labour movement and its failure to influence the political situation during the period of the Fourth Republic prevented the working class from coming forward as an active force when the Republic was struck by crisis and then fell. In the United States, the lack of a mass-scale workers' party and the relatively low level of workers' political consciousness gave rise to conditions in which workers' social discontent sometimes led some of them to support ultra-reactionary politicians such as George Wallace who criticised the current situation and demanded that "law and order" be reintroduced into the country.

THE GROWING ANTI-MONOPOLIST AND ANTI-CAPITALIST TRENDS IN THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE WORKING CLASS

Phenomena of the kind outlined above, although they became fairly widespread in certain countries at certain periods, did not, however, determine the main course of development of proletarian consciousness. Side by side with these transient phenomena there were to be observed *profound socio-psychological processes at work within the proletarian masses that were paving the way for an acute conflict between the proletariat and the whole system of state-monopoly capitalism.*

An important aspect of these processes was to be found in the far-reaching changes in the working class' *system of needs*. The encouragement of new mass-scale material needs that SMC had gone out of its way to use for its own purposes had proved in practice a two-edged weapon. Despite the rise in average living standards, the broad strata of the working people were still experiencing material poverty and deprivation. For other, still broader strata of the working people their purchasing power was seen all the time to be lagging behind the rising consumer standards. At a time when relatively favourable economic conditions prevailed (when the scale of cyclical crises and unemployment had been reduced), accompanied by loud propaganda to the effect that the era of "universal affluence" was at hand, phenomena of the above kind called forth increasingly resolute protest on the part of the working class. The masses, and in particular the younger generation of the working people, began to evaluate their standard of living, focusing their attention not only and not so much on its current level or on comparisons with past levels, as on a comparison between those living standards and the

opportunities the economy could have been providing for them and on a comparison between their own living standards and those enjoyed by the most highly paid strata of society, i.e. they approached the whole problem from a broader social perspective. Hence the phenomenon seen as paradoxical by many bourgeois politicians: a rapid stepping-up in the demands and militant activity of even those strata of the working class whose material position had been improving over a fairly long period.

New motives behind the working people's attitude to their own living standards came more clearly to the fore: these were determined not so much by their endeavour to satisfy material needs as by the awareness of their right to share the fruits of economic progress and to a steady enhancement of their material position. This development reflected the influence of the complex socio-political situation of the post-war period: the truth about the social achievements scored by the socialist countries that had filtered through the cold-war barriers, the increased role of the working class in economic development, the strengthening of its position within society and the impact produced by certain aspects of the capitalists' social tactics.

This meant that, albeit often in an as yet somewhat vague and "instinctive form", the endeavour of the working people to enhance the social dignity of the working man and to change his position in the system of social relations influenced the proletariat's view of even its elementary material needs. The growth of this endeavour robbed the image of the "integrated" toiler fashioned by the prophets of the "consumer society" of any semblance of reality even more conclusively than before: this toiler of the future was represented by bourgeois propaganda as a man ready to confine his ideals in life to a selection of standardised consumer value.

The increased importance of the issue of social dignity was a manifestation of the profound, qualitative changes in the whole system of the rank-and-file worker's needs.

Once the working people's elementary material needs had, in part at least, been satisfied, they began to turn their attention more and more to the price which capitalism was forcing them to pay for the rise in their living standards. An immediate stimulus behind this psychological change in attitudes was the increasing nervous and mental exhaustion experienced by workers as a result of the greater intensity of their work. This change also reflected their growing resistance to methods of capitalist exploitation based on the "carrot" of allegedly high wages. Questions regarding working conditions assumed more and more importance in the motives and demands involved in strike action: these questions covered such issues as the organisation and pace of labour, the length of leaves

granted and protests at the sweating system of wages.

Demands of this kind gave very clear expression to the working people's endeavour to enhance the human dignity of the working man: for example, the working people protested against the system of wages that made wage levels dependent upon the zeal, discipline and "loyalty" to the management displayed by workers, and demanded that a large part of their wages should include a guaranteed minimum. This last motive was closely linked with the growing need for a stable, secure material position and place in the system of production. This need, of course, had always been important for the proletariat, but in the 50s and in particular in the 60s and 70s, it emerged in a new capacity as one of the crucial motives behind the working people's militant activity. This was borne out by the widening scale of the struggle to provide conditions for the retraining of working people, whose trades had grown obsolete, and to link wages and social benefits to a cost of living index and to improve the system of job skills. Demands of this kind reflected not merely the material but also the social aspects of the problem, the refusal by the workers to have their lives shaped by norms dictated by the laws of the private-capitalist economy and its anarchic processes outside the control of society. Unemployment and similar phenomena were no longer regarded as unavoidable evils, but came to be appreciated more and more as something incompatible with the elementary norms of social existence.

This meant the workers' recent social experience brought them to a profound appreciation of the mechanisms at work within capitalist exploitation, which went further than protests against the most primitive "material" manifestations of those mechanisms. "Haven't we stopped being coolies, just because we've got television sets?" "In our system we'll never be better off than we are now. And we're not well off! However much they may boast about Swedish prosperity abroad! ... We don't need plastic boats, fridges and bars to be able to talk about decent standards... The fact is that we, me and all my mates, every worker in the whole of Sweden, are shut out of society. We are not free... We are ignorant and powerless... You have to have food to live, but having food is not enough to be able to say that you have a decent life". Statements such as these drawn from survey data recorded among West German and Swedish workers¹ bear witness to the far broader range of motives behind the social discontent of the working class, to the fact that in the final analysis many rank-and-

¹ *Socio-Political Changes in the Countries of Advanced Capitalism*, p. 91; *Das schwedische Modell der Ausbeutung. Texte zum Arbeiterleben und zur Klassenstruktur im Wohlfahrtsstaat*, edited by Victor Pfaff and Mond Wikhäll, Cologne—(West) Berlin, 1971, p. 48.

file workers have grasped the essence of the modified tactics of the capitalists and have succeeded in avoiding those psychological traps which the "consumer society" had set up for them. The extension of working-class needs has meant that protests against unsatisfactory working conditions have developed into protests against the whole system of social oppression and inequality, intrinsic to capitalist social relations.

Changes in the skill patterns of the working class and its higher educational and cultural levels were to have a most significant influence upon these socio-psychological processes. Longer years spent at school, and the more extensive knowledge acquired by workers, their improved access to information (thanks to the development of mass media) about phenomena, values and norms beyond the confines of their own personal experience and a certain rapprochement between industrial and office workers, the increase in the number of elements of skilled brain-work involved in the production functions of the broad strata of the working class, all encouraged the growing need for a life that was more mentally stimulating, varied and interesting, the need for creative activity and social growth. Around half of the West German workers questioned for a survey in 1965-1967 declared that they would be prepared to accept work that was less well paid if it were more varied and interesting; 67 per cent of them expressed dissatisfaction with opportunities for growth provided at their particular enterprise.¹ The magazine *Newsweek* wrote in May 1971: "All in all, the American blue-collar worker of today, while earning more real money (in terms of purchasing power) for fewer hours than ever before, is just plain unhappy." With reference to opinions expressed by rank-and-file workers, trade union representatives and specialists in labour relations the magazine named among reasons accounting for growing job dissatisfaction higher levels of education that led to higher levels of disappointment, and the influence of television that was "presenting an envy-arousing picture of affluence unattained".²

By the end of the 60s and beginning of the 70s admissions of this type were beginning to appear more and more frequently in scientific studies and the press of the capitalist countries. In the United States, Britain, Sweden, Italy and other countries representatives of the business world were becoming increasingly anxious at the revulsion felt by workers, particularly young and better educated ones, at the mind-blunting work required of them in industry where they were always in a subordinate position and the growing absenteeism stemming from this, at the increasingly rapid turnover

¹ Horst Kern and Michael Schumann, *Industriearbeit und Arbeiterbewusstsein*, Frankfurt on the Main, 1973, Vol. 2, p. 150.

² *Newsweek*, 1971, May 17, p. 54.

of the work force and the more and more frequent cases of sabotage of production.

The development of these higher—intellectual, cultural and moral—needs of the workers represented an irreconcilable contradiction to the principles of capitalist industrial and social organisation. Needs of this type found among the working people capitalism is far less well equipped to satisfy than material needs: the aims of capitalist production demand that the personality of the worker, his intellectual potential and whole life be totally subordinate to the goal of securing maximum profits for the capitalists. Neither social-demagogic measures that allegedly take account of the working people's endeavour to achieve "enhanced social status", nor the extension of the system provided in a number of capitalist countries for workers' vocational training change anything essential. Measures of this sort are always limited by the narrow framework of the business interests of the capitalist economy, and therefore workers' greater knowledge would only be used in a very much doctored fashion: capitalists are always promoting the trend to turn the worker into an appendage of his machine even when this is in blatant contradiction to the objective demands of the productive forces. In the vast majority of cases the path to the profession of engineer or research worker remains closed to the man from the factory floor: despite a certain democratisation of higher education, workers' children have fewer opportunities to enter higher education, let alone to complete it, than do children of bourgeois or middle-class families.

When workers come up against these social barriers inherent in the very nature of the capitalist order, the new needs and aspirations of the working class render more acute workers' sense of social inequality and dependence on forces outside their control which dominate society. For this reason in many detachments of the working class, and in particular in the most advanced and militant ones, these needs and aspirations found expression in protests against the existing system of economic and political power, in demands for the democratisation of the whole socio-political edifice.

The development of the mass labour movement, particularly during the second half of the 60s, reflected these new socio-psychological trends. In most of the capitalist countries these manifested themselves in the rapid increase in the militant activity of mass demonstrations calling for the immediate satisfaction of partial socio-economic demands. Increasingly long strikes and the use of more forceful forms of struggle (for example, mass occupation of factories), heightened determination and resolution and more initiative on the part of rank-and-file workers, who had often begun their strike action despite the instructions of the union leadership, all this made

it clear that even during "purely" economic strikes the working masses were expressing their aspirations that went far beyond simple increases in wages or improved working conditions. The motives behind the economic struggle of the working class now covered a far wider range: material demands more and more frequently represented protests against the *totality* of existing social conditions in the societies based on exploitation.

The development of the above socio-psychological trends provided far more substantial preconditions for the "politicisation" of the working masses' consciousness and for their transition to a stance of more active political struggle. Under SMC, even the struggle to get elementary material demands met brought the workers up against the capitalist state with its policy of moulding the living conditions of the proletariat in keeping with the long-term interests of the capitalist economy. This clash became even more acute when the working masses in one way or another came out against the relations of social dependence. In conditions where the role of the state was becoming ever wider in all spheres of social life it took upon itself more and more blatantly the functions of guarantor and defender of those relations.

The spontaneous development of mass needs inevitably overtook the process of their logical appreciation and elaboration as part of a system of organised action. The changes in the needs of the working class outlined above paved the way towards important new preconditions for revolutionising working-class consciousness. Yet spontaneous socio-psychological trends in themselves cannot automatically develop into a deliberate programme to revolutionise the existing order. Here the decisive role is that of "socialist thought" and the activity of the organised labour movement. The elaboration of programmes of action for the movement that corresponded to the new level of the working masses' social aspirations and the practical organisation of struggle to implement those aspirations were to be the all-important conditions for the realisation of the considerably extended revolutionary potential of the working class.

A crucial role in the solution of these tasks was that played by the political and ideological activity of the proletariat's Marxist-Leninist vanguard. Meanwhile the processes at work within the Social Democratic parties and the reformist trade unions bore witness to the fact that the development of the consciousness of that section of the masses that had been under the influence of the former was now coming into conflict with reformist ideology and the politics of class collaboration. Militant class-conscious trends were being organised and rallying everywhere in the unions: under pressure from the mass struggle certain changes were now to be observed in the programmes for action and political stance of the vast majority of

reformist trade unions. These changes reflected the growing opposition on the part of the working people to SMC. The ideological and political differentiation within the Social Democratic movement was on the increase and left-socialist tendencies were gaining ground.

The growing anti-monopolist and anti-capitalist trends in the mass consciousness of the proletariat could not overnight do away with the reformist illusions which were deep-rooted just as the traditions of trade union "economism". These trends were developing unevenly in the various national detachments of the working class and those which embraced specific professions or specific skill levels. At a time when the structure of the working class was becoming significantly more complex, the unevenness of its ideological and psychological levels of development was also bound to increase.

The narrowing of the gap between the blue-collar workers and white-collar workers, or the mass strata of office workers and members of the scientific and technical intelligentsia, and the proletarianisation of these strata had a dialectically contradictory effect upon the ideas and attitudes of the working class. On the one hand, these processes led to a wider proliferation of proletarian norms, traditions and socio-political conceptions of new strata of the working people. The organisation of unions among white-collar workers and members of the intelligentsia proceeded more rapidly and these groups became more involved in the mass-scale militant activity of the working class and a spirit of proletarian collectivism made itself felt. The most educated strata of the working people, when they were drawn into the class struggle of the proletariat, brought with them a keen and deliberate interest in problems of the democratic reforms in both production and society. They thereby helped to widen the social horizons of the broad working masses and to promote new demands.

On the other hand, the socio-psychological and social (with regard to labour functions, social status and prestige, etc.) differences between those engaged in manual and those engaged in mental labour, which still existed, gave rise to certain problems in the formation of class consciousness of the expanding working class. Individualism and concentration on career prospects within the office or profession concerned and the resulting social passivity are features which are traditionally associated with the wide strata of white-collar workers and graduate specialists under capitalism, although they are less prominent now, thanks to the influence of objective social change but nevertheless continue to set many of the above apart from industrial workers. The social changes referred to earlier cannot overnight sever the psychological ties between these social groups and the bourgeoisie: the findings

of empirical surveys have shown that most members of these groups continue to see themselves as part of the middle class.

Empirical data also make it clear that in every individual country the political stance of the majority of the white-collar workers continued to be markedly different from that of blue-collar workers. According to the calculations of Soviet researchers based on the results of surveys made between 1972 and 1976, the Communist Party in France was supported by approximately 36 per cent of industrial workers and 16 per cent of rank-and-file office workers: the equivalent figures relating to support for the Socialists from the two groups concerned were 27 and 30 per cent and their support for the bourgeois parties was 36 and 54 per cent respectively. In Italy, 46 per cent of industrial workers supported the Communist Party and 17 per cent of employees in the retail sector and offices, 26 per cent of the industrial workers and 7 per cent of the retail sector and office employees supported the Socialists, and finally 28 per cent of industrial workers supported the bourgeois parties and 66 per cent of the retail sector and office employees. In the FRG, 66 per cent of industrial workers voted for the Social Democrats in 1972 and 50 per cent of the white-collar workers; in Britain, in 1974 53 per cent of the workers voted for the Labour Party and 29 per cent of the white-collar workers, while the remaining social groups voted mainly for the parties of the right. In Spain, the parties of the left were supported by 36 per cent of the industrial workers and only 22 per cent of those employed in the retail sector and offices.¹

The partial closing of the gap between workers both in and outside industry with white-collar workers meant that the latter group introduced their attitudes into the working man's environment. This inevitably made itself felt within the labour movement: the broadening of its mass base signified at the same time a certain broadening of the channels through which petty-bourgeois influence might spread.

The Communist parties as they devoted particular attention to work among these strata and sought to draw them into the class struggle and develop their consciousness, at the same time never lost sight of the fact that the industrial proletariat was the most progressive and most militant detachment of the working class and that its role was the central one in the labour movement. Only this policy created the essential preconditions for the true cohesion of the working class on the foundation of a consistent struggle to defend its interests and to enhance the level of its socio-political consciousness.

¹ *Workers Voting in the Countries of Western Europe*, Moscow, 1980, pp. 107, 122, 196, 206, 276, 343, 386, 394 (in Russian).

The more varied composition of the working class and the rise in its intellectual and cultural level were exerting an ever more far-reaching influence upon the practice and indeed the whole "style" of the labour movement's activity. The masses of the working people were becoming more inclined to adopt a rational approach to socio-political problems and their independent analysis, to the assessment of political slogans and programmes, starting out not so much from whether or not their declared aims were attractive, as from the real opportunities and means for their implementation.

In these conditions purely propaganda methods for winning influence among the masses became increasingly less effective: what mattered was whether programmes of political trends were well substantiated and how realistic they had proved in practice. The spokesmen of bourgeois and reformist ideology tried to use these tendencies against revolutionary ideas; they sought to introduce bourgeois technocratic "rationality" into the consciousness of the masses and subordinate the activity of the workers' organisations to it. For the labour movement greater competence, greater realism and tangibility in the solutions to economic, social and political problems were the most urgent questions. Without this provision conditions became increasingly difficult for the organisation of a truly mass-scale political movement and the defence of the interests of the working class in the socio-political arena.

These socio-psychological shifts within the working class of the capitalist countries came particularly clearly to the fore after the late 60s. Precisely these changes had paved the way for the rapid mounting tide of the working-class socio-political activity. In its turn the latter gave rise to national crises in a number of countries that seriously shook up the political stability of capitalism. These shifts also made themselves felt in the reaction of the working class to the economic crisis which struck the capitalist world in the mid-70s, revealing the instability of the position of the working people and the insecurity of the living standards they had achieved. This crisis obliged many of them to give up their former consumption levels and added to the problems and hardships of their day-to-day lives. The working masses now had a clearer understanding of the unstable nature of the working man's position in capitalist society. While the younger generation of workers suffered most of all from the crisis, coming up against it at the very threshold of their working life, for many workers of the older generation the crisis of the 70s provided as it were an outward sign that their expectations would never be fulfilled. After starting out on their working life in conditions of mass unemployment and material hardship in the critical 30s and naively believing that the "thriving" post-war years would last forever, these workers were obliged to acknowledge

in the 70s that this optimism had been ill-founded and their hopes for a better life had been in vain.

All in all, the influence of the economic crisis did not cancel out, but, on the contrary, strengthened to a large extent the trends of developing class consciousness and demands from the working masses that had been emerging before the crisis. The experience of the late 60s and early 70s was not forgotten.

The working class' heightened awareness of its social dignity and strength, and the higher level of its social demands were reflected in its reaction to the crisis. Precisely these traits of preceding development of mass working-class consciousness explain why, despite the deterioration in the actual conditions of struggle and in a situation very different from those which had arisen as a result of the crises in the inter-war years, the critical 70s did not lead to any sudden decline in the strike movement. In a number of countries, a mass-scale struggle against unemployment developed on an unprecedented scale and in a more intense form than ever before. The more active, organised and militant detachments of the working class deliberately involved themselves in the struggle against state-monopolistic policy directed towards finding a way out of the crisis at the expense of the working people.

The experience of the class struggle during the period of crisis confirmed more clearly than ever, that in the mass strata of the working class there were now present the socio-psychological preconditions for the campaign for the profound change of the whole course of state policy and for the democratisation of the socio-political system. The working masses were now paying more and more attention to the problem of elaborating democratic programmes to counter the effects of the crisis, constituting alternatives to the course of SMC. A clearer understanding had been reached by many groups of the working people of the link between the current crisis phenomena and the militarist tendencies of state-monopolistic policy. New strata of workers were becoming involved in the movement for detente and disarmament, even including workers from the arms industry. Indicative in this respect was the example of the shop-stewards at Lucas Aerospace in Britain, who elaborated a plan for the reorganisation of their factories for non-military production.¹

The consequences of the crisis made growing numbers of the working people aware of the need to intensify the influence of the organised working class on the policy of the entrepreneurs and the state. In the mass workers' movement in a number of countries this was borne out by the wide popularity of demands that the working people and their organisations should participate at all levels in man-

¹ *Za rubezhom*, No. 31, 1979, p. 10.

agement and that the whole socio-political system should be democratised. In countries which had freed themselves from the yoke of fascist regimes in the 70s—Portugal, Greece and Spain—the working class had become the most active and massive force campaigning for democratic reforms. In France, the majority of the working class gave wide support to the Joint Programme of the Left Parties, while the Italian working class continued its unrelenting struggle for democratic reforms, and for changes in the class-based character of the power structure.

Yet it is important not to overlook the negative aspects of the impact which this crisis had on the mass consciousness of the proletarian strata and those now in the process of proletarianisation.

Mass-scale redundancies and the deterioration of the economic position of the working class made it more difficult for a section of the working class to put forward demands that went beyond those of a purely material variety. The dissatisfaction of the worker with the content and the social conditions of his life has not vanished, of course, yet the changed socio-economic situation often tended to narrow down the horizons of the less politically aware sections of the working people and to confine their interests to the protection of the living standards already achieved. Bourgeois policy-makers and propagandists made wide use of such moods, propagating the idea that at the time of crisis any far-reaching changes in the socio-economic sphere might bring in their wake still more deterioration of the economic position. The crisis, therefore, increased the heterogeneity of the socio-political consciousness of the masses. While the crisis led the more advanced and militant section of the masses to activate their struggle and broaden their aims, it led, among large strata of the working people, to increased uncertainty, hesitation and a fear of change. This disorientating psychological effect of the crisis was in considerable measure intensified by the reformist parties, which in a number of cases sought to convince their adherents of the need to tone down their demands and to postpone any major changes "till better times". Their stance, naturally, made it harder for the masses to appreciate the real political opportunities for such changes. Even in those countries, such as France, for example, in which the majority of the nation came out in favour of a radical, democratic programme, the exacerbation by the crisis of the contradiction between a moderately reformist and consistently anti-monopolistic course seriously weakened the case of the workers and the democratic forces. This in its turn inevitably had a negative effect upon the consciousness of the masses who supported them.

In countries where Social Democratic parties occupied the dominant position within the labour movement, particularly where the

latter were in power, their obvious inability to cope with crisis phenomena and the fact that they virtually supported the state-monopolistic course for dealing with the crisis, spread disillusionment with political activity as a whole amongst the masses, and in the working class as well. A mood of political passivity and apathy set in. This was one of the important socio-psychological preconditions for the move to the right, which took place in the political life of the number of countries, in which right-wing bourgeois parties subsequently came to power. At the same time among some groups of working people the spread of such moods created an atmosphere of hopelessness and despair enabling ideas of irrational rebellion to gain ground. These ideas were propagated by ultra-left, anarchistic and also neofascist groupings, the last of which achieved this by exploiting "radical" social demagoguery as they did so. It was made even easier for trends of this kind to spread because the crisis was producing more and more declassé elements, particularly among the unemployed and those young people without any experience of working life and the class struggle.

The contradictory nature of these trends to be observed in the development of workers' consciousness in the wake of the crisis was not manifested to an equal extent in the labour movement of the capitalist countries. In Britain, for example, where the level of organisation among industrial and office workers was high and where for many years there had been a gradual consolidation of the left forces in the labour movement and the scale of the demands put forward by the unions had been growing up until 1975 roughly, the growth of unemployment and other similar phenomena did not lead to any falling-off in the fighting spirit and readiness for the fray. On the contrary, during the 70s class battles took place on a scale that had not been seen for a long time, workers were actively fighting against redundancies and unemployment and a movement for factory sit-ins and "work-ins" became widespread. Trade union membership grew. Later, however, the picture was to change. There was a drop in strike activity. The scale of union demands became dramatically more modest. This stemmed to no small extent from the fact that the Labour government was in power, which the unions and workers did not want to hinder in its "fight against inflation". "Moderate" leaders were now consolidating their positions in a number of trade unions. The policies pursued by the Labour Party did not provide any real prospects for improvement in the position of the working people, and this tended to undermine their militant spirit. According to some figures, at the 1979 election which ended in victory for the Conservatives, the latter party had succeeded in somewhat broadening its electoral base within the working class.

Similar processes were to be observed in the FRG, albeit developing at a different level. In that country, in which the readiness of a considerable section of the working class to engage in struggle had been relatively low before as well, the crisis inhibited the socio-political activity of the masses to a greater extent. As pointed out by the West German Communists: "The workers generate a conciliatory mood, uncertainty and insecurity, and dampen solidarity. They are less willing to advance new demands and will take collective action only, as a rule, when pushed to defend already conquered ground."¹

The impact of the crisis on the political consciousness of the workers stemmed not only from the initial level of that consciousness but also from the nature of the leadership in the labour movement in each specific country. In Italy, for example, with its powerful Communist Party and militant trade unions, which as early as the 60s had tried to take up the struggle for the immediate demands of the workers in their fight for social change, the climate of class conflict did not cool down during the crisis period. In 1975, the scale of the strike movement was greater than it had been the year before.

Yet despite all this, the crisis made it hard to mobilise forces, to select suitable goals and secure interaction between the various detachments of the Italian labour movement. Trends emerged in the consciousness of certain strata of the working people, against which the leadership of the United Federation of Trade Unions had to wage a fierce struggle. One of these was the purely defensive interpretation of the slogan calling for fuller employment, which reduced it to no more than opposition to redundancies and factory closures, which threatened to split the ranks of the workers and reduce their activity to no more than resistance to the actions of the employers. The workers did not always succeed in linking their struggle against unemployment with broader, more constructive demands—for the reorganisation of the production system, for the provision of full employment, the introduction of control over investment and the stimulation of development in the backward South. Another danger also present at this time was that of a split between the struggle of those still in employment and that of the unemployed. Among the categories of workers who came under the influence of autonomous trade unions, trends towards an inward-looking corporate approach began to develop. Without taking into account the overall strategy of the labour movement, these predominantly highly paid groups of Italian white-collar workers made

¹ Josef Schleifstein, Johannes H. von Heiseler, "Workers' Class Consciousness: Level and Trends", in *World Marxist Review*, No. 12, 1975, p. 37.

exaggeratedly high wage claims. In this way they played into the hands of bourgeois propaganda, which represented the "insatiable" appetite of the unions as the main cause of inflation.

Yet these and other centrifugal trends were operating against a background of high-level activity and impressive cohesion of the bulk of the working class, at a time when progress was being achieved in the organisation of the unemployed from the South, who were being drawn into the struggle, when there was overall growth of the prestige and influence of the United Federation of Trade Unions, to whose voice the government was obliged to listen during the time of crisis. The crisis made the working class of Italy even more determined not to reconcile itself any more to the blatant vices of the existing social system, and the constructive course of the labour movement, directed towards the achievement of goals that would affect that nation as a whole, helped once again to close the gap between its progressive forces and the non-proletarian strata of the population.

For the consciousness of the modern working class in the capitalist countries to develop, it is important that there should be a heightened awareness of the need for a realistic economic and political alternative to state-monopolistic domination. When the organised labour movement proves, from the ideological and political angle, capable of elaborating such an alternative, its struggle against the consequences of the economic crisis leads to further advances in the militant consciousness of the masses. On the other hand, if the workers' mass organisations lack clear, consistently class-based positions on the key issues connected with finding a way out of the crisis, this tends to bring out the negative features in mass consciousness and to foster socio-political passivity and apathy among certain strata of the working people. Even in those situations, however, the level of the working people's awareness of their own needs and interests achieved earlier and their experience create considerable preconditions for the consolidation of militant class-based trends within the labour movement.

On the whole, changes in proletarian consciousness between 1950 and 1980 found expression in the development of a number of important new aspects of the mentality of the working class. On the one hand, the working class was more aware of its social strength. This awareness was heightened by experience of victorious socialist revolutions, the growing power and organisational strength of the labour movement and of its numerous achievements in the class struggle. This period saw the gradual overcoming by the workers of their narrow and sectarian approach, of their inability to link problems of class or intra-class groups with the issues or prospects of social development as a whole. Finally there was a rise in the

cultural and intellectual levels of the working masses and of their capacity for rational appreciation of social reality.

On the other hand, it should be borne in mind that the overall growth of the proletariat's social needs was by no means always reflected in its appreciation of the corresponding interests and goals of its own class in the socio-political arena. This fact was widely exploited by bourgeois ideologists and in the social tactics of the ruling class, aimed at channelling this growth of needs along a path of individualistic narrow conceptions and values, in order to make the proletariat's class consciousness disintegrated.

From the above it is clear that the path necessary now, if the present contradictions within the consciousness of the working class in the capitalist countries are to be overcome, lies through the realisation by the working masses of the real possibilities for fundamentally restructuring society in accordance with those aspirations which characterise the present level of its psychological and intellectual development. These possibilities are substantiated by Marxism-Leninism and are borne out by the experience of real socialism, of the struggle by the labour movement to achieve concrete aims expressing the needs of the working people.

Part Three

**LABOUR MOVEMENT UPSURGE
AND CAPITALISM'S WORSENING
GENERAL CRISIS**

Chapter 7

THE LABOUR MOVEMENT AND CAPITALISM'S DEEPENING SOCIAL CONTRADICTIONS

The development of the labour movement in the period under consideration depended on the aggregate of international and domestic conditions forming in the industrially-advanced capitalist nations. It was also linked with the processes occurring in the position and the consciousness of the working class, examined in preceding sections of the present volume and it was affected by those specific forms that capitalism's major class antagonism took from the 50s through the 70s.

The paramount conditions of the fresh exacerbation in internal contradictions of capitalism were the crisis in its economic, social and political strategy, and the mounting power and activity of forces clamouring for a change in society. The deep-seated contradictions building up behind the façade of state-monopoly "regulation" of economic and social affairs sharply burst through to the surface since the late 60s, causing a leap-like increase in capitalist society's economic and political instability which grew into the economic crisis of the 70s.

This pattern of capitalist crisis exerts an effect on the nature of the tasks objectively confronting the labour movement. It is apparent, first, in the content of those issues which social life thrusts into the foreground and which acquire urgent significance for the working class. Second, it is evident in the influence of the social strategy and tactics of the ruling class on the evolution of the labour movement. Finally, it is manifest in the fact that the labour movement is itself an active subject in the development of class contradictions of capitalism; the results of its own activity and the gains it has made constantly alter the objective conditions of that activity and the nature of problems facing the movement.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC ISSUES OF THE LABOUR MOVEMENT 1950-1980

In the circumstances of state-monopoly capitalism the working-class struggle for living standards is compounded by the fact that besides the direct resistance by capitalists it comes up against the much more refined tactics employed by the bourgeois state. Appreciating the inevitability of certain concessions to workers' economic demands, the ruling circles have banked on centralised control and a limited growth of their living standards capable of ensuring the interests of capitalist accumulation and profit-making. Their strategy was aimed at undermining the workers' fight to safeguard their interests. It brought with it the danger of demolishing the very basis of the labour movement, of turning the working class into a passive and helpless object of state-monopoly policy.

In the new circumstances, the labour movement was no longer able to measure success only by progress in the workers' material and social situation. Of mounting importance was the question of whether the yardstick of that progress depended on authoritarian state-monopoly control or on the pressure of the organised working class in spite of the aggregate capitalist.

During the 50s and 60s that issue evinced the most acute conflict over attempts by governing circles to restrict workers' living standards by an "incomes policy". In foiling the incomes policy, the working class of several countries affirmed its right to independent action in defence of its interests. Yet under pressure from the economic crisis of the mid-70s, state-monopoly capitalism once again attempted to return to the incomes policy, endeavouring to undermine the workers' economic struggle through tying trade unions to all manner of "social contracts" and "concerted actions", and introducing the anti-democratic "neocorporate" practice of adopting decisions on living standard problems.

The gap between workers' living conditions and the opportunities in this respect resulting from technological and economic progress had become in the 60s a typical feature of the proletariat's socio-economic status. Of course, that gap had existed hitherto, but as long as the great bulk of working people had been directly threatened with hunger and poverty (as had often happened in the period between the two world wars and in the immediate post-war years), it was less important than the lack of the elementary minimum of living standard. Only when the trend to a better economic situation had acquired a relatively stable character, when many workers had gained access in one way or another to an average consumption level, did the issue of workers' share in created wealth come to the fore. From the 50s through the 70s the issue was producing an in-

creasingly sharp reaction amongst the working class and was more and more insistently being put forward by the mass labour movement.

As the working class made more economic gains, the issue of its living standards and role in production was coming increasingly to the fore, and the insufficiency of what had been achieved in that area was becoming ever more apparent. Under pressure from the new alignment of forces, bourgeois society was forced to recognise the working class' right to social guarantees of its economic status. But neither formal recognition, nor growth in the range and size of social benefits solved the problem of material security for a substantial number of workers, their uncertainty about the future. As before, one of the most onerous manifestations of the lack of material security was unemployment, the threat of losing one's job or depreciation of one's skills. Inflation, the spiralling cost of living, was another constant factor of the 70s.

In such circumstances, guaranteed employment and defence of living standards became prime targets in the working-class struggle; it was increasingly obvious that that struggle had to be closely linked with the overall movement to expand the working people's socio-economic rights.

The greater role of the working class in production and society in social and legal terms substantially enhanced the importance of *collective agreement in relations between employers and workers*. Promotion of that regulation meant, on the one hand, the collective agreement system being extended to a greater number of industries and firms. It was recognised in several instances by special legislative acts (in France in 1950, Belgium in 1968, West Germany in 1949 and Italy in 1959). Collective agreements of one form or another embraced 87.5 per cent of British blue-collar workers and 57.1 per cent of white-collar workers in the mid-60s,¹ and some 18 million of the US work force by 1970, including some 32 per cent of private sector employees.²

On the other hand, collective agreement regulation in some countries began to exceed the bounds of wage and working time issues, covering an ever wider range of obligations by employers on working conditions, procedures for hiring and sacking labour, social security, worker training, and so on. The 1966-1967 strike movement in Italy, for example, led to the signing of collective agreements in several industries envisaging the obligation by employers to inform unions of changes in technology and labour organisation, to the setting up

¹ *Royal Commission on Trade Unions and Employers' Associations 1965-1968*, London, 1968, p. 10.

² See *Industrial and Labour Relations Review*, No. 3, 1970, p. 327.

of joint committees at factories for sorting out conflicts over piece-work payments, rating the skills and determining the working conditions in harmful jobs. In the United States, a number of unions succeeded in the 1940s and 1950s in having included in collective agreements clauses on pensions and health insurance for the workers.

The expansion in a number of countries (Britain one of them) of contracts signed at company and enterprise level (together with industrial agreements) was of considerable importance in extending the scope of collective agreements and in involving all workers more actively in the fight for their interests.

Collective agreements enable workers regularly to get a revision of labour payment and other aspects of their status in line with changed circumstances (for example, when the cost of living rises). It replaces the old individual "capitalist-worker" relations, facilitating a split in the work collective, by relations between capitalists and that collective, the workers of an entire industry or area, their trade union organisations. So collective agreements not only go some way to consolidating workers' economic status, they also help promote proletarian collectivism, organisation and greater class awareness. By rendering the class struggle a systematic character, they are capable of promoting militancy of the masses. It is not fortuitous that in several capitalist states the renewal of collective agreements becomes the cause of most acute and broad class conflicts.

However, there were also other implications of the collective agreement practice for the labour movement. Employers and the state stepped up attempts to turn collective agreement into an instrument of class reconciliation, to use it to attune workers and their organisations to the aims of the capitalist enterprise. The process of decentralisation of collective agreements and extension of their content was viewed by capitalist management as a means of imposing fresh obligations on workers in relation to the firm, inculcating in them an interest in the results of the firm's activity. Thus, in the words of the Italian economist Giuseppe Bianchi, "collective agreements are more and more becoming a means of overcoming economic contradictions and conflicts affecting distribution of power".¹

One of the most difficult issues facing the labour movement over development of collective agreement relations has been defence of the right to strike. In some countries (like West Germany and Canada), the existing legal practice or legislation have compelled the unions to restrain from striking during the lifetime of the agreements. In several countries, a clause to this effect is included in many collective agreements. That practice became particularly wide-

¹ Giuseppe Bianchi, *Sindacati e impresa*, Milan, 1969, p. 152.

spread with the development of agreements envisaging higher productivity, the firm's better economic performance, etc. From the late 60s measures were being prepared in Britain for banning "unofficial" (i.e. unapproved by central union leadership) strikes and for stricter regulation of strike conflicts (introduction of a month-long "cooling-off" period for some types of disputes, etc.). The Royal Commission on Trade Unions and Employers' Associations¹ and the Labour Government's White paper "In Place of Strife" (1969) both formulated such proposals. In France, with the consent of reformist trade unions, many agreements at enterprises included a clause on refraining from strikes during the collective agreement's lifetime or on a "cooling-off period". From the late 60s and early 70s this clause became a compulsory element in the new type of collective agreement—the so-called "progress contracts" in which higher wages and shorter working time were tied to the firm's performance.

The evolution of collective agreement relations, therefore, has with fresh urgency brought the labour movement up against the problem of whether such agreements with the bourgeoisie could be possible as a matter of principle, insofar as they tied workers to the objectives of capitalist enterprises and thereby in one way or another blunted their militant initiative, their right to independent defence of their interests. Specifically, these tactics were expressed in collective agreements including clauses on paying workers bonuses as "profit-sharing" (USA and France), and particularly in the so-called "productivity agreements" that became widespread during the 60s in the USA, Britain, France and other capitalist countries. That form of agreement made higher wages and social benefits dependent upon higher productivity, which enabled administration to push through measures to raise productivity with union accord and gave it more leeway in determining the forms of work organisation, distributing jobs, worsening working conditions (by speed-up, multi-shift work, etc.), and, finally, sacking workers under the pretext of increasing production efficiency. In many cases productivity agreements led to mass redundancies (for instance, the agreement signed in 1970 in the British steel industry envisaged work force reduction of 40 per cent by 1975).

The productivity agreements became quite widespread, which indicated the danger they posed to the labour movement. In Britain, for example, they covered about a quarter of all the work force by late 1971.² In France, where the CGT unions invariably refused to sign such agreements, they had nonetheless been signed with re-

¹ *Royal Commission on Trade Unions and Employers' Association 1965-1968*, p. 267.

² *Morning Star*, October 14, 1971.

formist unions since 1955—first at the Renault works¹ and subsequently at other large-scale factories.

By contrast with the USA, where extension of workers' social rights occurred mainly within the framework of collective agreement regulation, legislation played a much greater part in this process in Western Europe. After World War II, laws were passed in the USA on government insurance in the event of full disability or loss of breadwinner, and insurance for old age was somewhat extended; during the 60s the USA introduced laws on temporary disability, industrial accidents, unemployment and some other insurance schemes. But the scale of such legislation was, on the whole, much narrower than that in Western Europe. In Europe, while the collective agreements specified mainly the wage level and other concrete aspects of labour relations typical of the given industry or enterprise, the most common standards regulating workers' economic status, the rights of their organisations, and social security were largely an object of state policy and consequently acted as *social guarantees*. As historical experience shows, this form of regulation of workers' economic status corresponds more to the working class' direct interests and provides greater room for developing its class struggle than merely collective agreement regulation. The rights won on a national scale extend to the whole mass of workers, not only to that part which is covered by collective agreements and possesses the opportunities for attaining better employment terms.

Legislative regulation of the socio-economic status of the working class enhances its consolidation and the growth of its economic into political struggle, bringing the labour movement directly into conflict with the capitalist state. Thus, an important demand of the labour movement in several countries became the establishment on a nationwide scale of a compulsory minimum wage. Although such a minimum is nearly always used to hold down wages at an extremely low level, its establishment nevertheless means recognition of social standards of work payment irrespective of the economic situation and the relationship between demand and supply of labour.

A *pensions and benefits system* under state-monopoly capitalism has become a paramount aim of the working class' socio-economic struggle, directly bringing it into the limelight of national politics. In most capitalist countries that system took shape after the war. But despite the successes achieved in the 50s and 60s, its development in the capitalist world was generally far from the level necessary to maintaining normal living conditions. Even in the Swedish pension security system, reckoned to be the most progressive within

¹ *Régie Nationale des Usines Renault. Accord d'entreprise*, Paris, 1955.

the capitalist world, the size of old-age pensions was no more than 60-65 per cent of former wages, and they were only obtainable after the age of 67. In France, the pension age was 65, and the size was no more than 40 per cent of wages. In the USA, old-age pension levels were normally between 20 and 40 per cent of the wages. Pensions and other benefits increasingly suffered from inflation, inasmuch as their increase regularly lagged behind the rising cost of living. Millions of aged workers in most capitalist states were doomed to a miserly, semi-starvation existence.

The historical experience of the socio-economic struggle of the working class has convincingly demonstrated the close interrelation and intermingling of various aspects and manifestations of capitalist exploitation. State-monopoly capitalism has considerably expanded and improved the exploitation system, making it more flexible, capable of rapidly adapting itself to changing conditions, including also to certain gains made by the labour movement. That has enabled the ruling class, when retreating in one area, to go onto the offensive in another. Thus, concessions in the sphere of wages and social security are compensated by higher prices, increasing intensity of work and measures to concentrate and rationalise production leading to unemployment; the monopoly control of consumer demand, the artificial stimulation of consumption through advertising, the mass media and the system of consumer credit all effectively supplement exploitation in production and increase the instability of workers' economic status.

Socio-economic regulation on the state level makes it possible to tilt the balance of forces formed in the class struggle at factories and in industries towards monopoly interests: this is done both through redistribution of the national income via taxation, by measures to hamper wage rises and by direct government interference in class conflicts.

All these characteristics of capitalist exploitation under state-monopoly capitalism were evident with particular force during the economic crisis of the 70s.

The crisis considerably exacerbated problems of the working class' socio-economic situation. Already at the start of the decade, under the impact of 1969-1971 crisis phenomena, the bulk of people in capitalist states, and first and foremost blue- and white-collar workers, lived in a climate of mounting uncertainty about the future and the threat of a fresh worsening in the economic situation. During those years the rate of economic growth fell overall in the capitalist world: industrial output in the industrially-advanced capitalist states increased in 1970 by only 2 per cent, by contrast with 7.9 per cent in 1968. In the USA, in Italy, Sweden and some other West European countries there was not only a fall in the rate, but an ab-

solute reduction of industrial output (by 4.1 per cent in the USA in 1970 as compared with 1969). From mid-73, after the shortest lived period of revival and upswing in post-war capitalist history, a fresh fall in industrial growth rates began everywhere, and in 1974 industrial output fell in absolute terms in a number of countries.

The falling output and rising unemployment combined with catastrophic inflation represented a major distinguishing feature of the crisis of the 70s, which had a disastrous effect on the condition of the working people.

Another specific feature of the economic disasters of the 70s was that the underlying crisis of general overproduction was complemented by structural crises: in energy, raw materials, food and currency. These phenomena were new forms of exacerbation of capitalism's basic contradiction, above all in international economic relations and division of labour. At the same time they reflected the changing relationship between imperialism and the developing countries, with the latter no longer reconciled to uncontrolled monopoly exploitation of their raw material resources. The raising of oil prices and other measures taken by developing countries to protect their economic interests undermined a prop of the economic mechanism of state-monopoly capitalism and its policy of economic growth—the unlimited use of cheap raw material. Naturally enough, the monopolies transferred the rising costs of production on to the working people.

The worsening contradictions in the world capitalist economy and the currency crisis further intensified the disproportions of the capitalist economy, its chaotic nature and instability. They demonstrated with particular force the futility of state-monopoly methods for putting the capitalist house in order. Operating as factors in intensifying inflation and the shortage of several mass consumer goods and services, unprecedented in peacetime, these crises were a fresh heavy blow to the workers' vital interests.

In crisis conditions there was a marked politicisation of problems of the workers' economic situation. While, on the one hand, their living standards were undermined by the spontaneous crisis processes, on the other, they came under mounting pressure from the state-monopoly power.

The crisis revealed the precariousness of the gains the labour movement attained in fighting for its direct socio-economic interests. The insufficiency of isolated struggle for various specific socio-economic goals—for example, for higher wages, shorter working hours, and various partial reforms—became clearer than ever. The labour movement was faced with the task of expanding the campaign front so as to make irrevocable every gain achieved. That brought the

movement to the problem of intervening in the mechanism of capitalist exploitation, affecting it both at enterprise and industry level, and at the level of the national economy and the government's socio-economic policy (and in many cases, particularly in the countries of Western Europe, on an international scale too).

In the mid-60s and onwards, the working class of many European capitalist countries began more and more frequently to advance slogans of so-called "economic democracy"—i.e. workers' control and participation in management.

"Economic democracy" means mainly extending the rights of trade unions and worker representation bodies at enterprises, their participation in dealing with issues of capital investment, hiring and sacking, wage rates, bonuses, conveyor speed, the firm's social policy, and so on. That was powerfully dictated by the vital interests of the working class, its mounting needs, by the effect that state-monopoly development and the scientific and technological revolution were having on its position. The movement for workers' control and participation in management plays a major role in the socio-economic struggle developing into a campaign for democracy—i.e. a political struggle. At the same time it is formal participation in management that is most used by the bourgeoisie in a bid to smother the class approach in the activity of labour organisations.

The post-WW II democratic upsurge brought labour substantial gains in the rights of participation in management. In the immediate post-war years several West European countries passed laws or reached a consensus on setting up standing worker representation bodies or joint worker-management councils at factories. Their functions greatly differed from country to country, but everywhere they enjoyed certain, though rather limited, rights to represent workers' interests in various sectors of factory management and to supervise the activity of the administration in those sectors. But what was fundamentally important was the very recognition of that right, since it was a considerable concession wrenched by the workers from the ruling class.

All the same, in all the countries in which there existed worker representation bodies, both legislation and management practice prevented their interference in the main issues of the firm's economic activity. At best they succeeded only in exercising the right to economic information and "expressing their opinion". In fact they took part in management only of the social and everyday affairs of the enterprise (organising workers' catering, children's nurseries, etc.). The labour movement's demands for control of the firm's economic policy ran up against particularly stubborn resistance from the bourgeoisie, which saw them as an attack on the "hallowed right" of private ownership. As the National Council of French Em-

employers put it in 1965, "in the sphere of management of the enterprises authority cannot be shared".¹

Even with their rights inevitably limited under capitalist conditions, the worker representation bodies might well have become a salient instrument of class struggle and development of class awareness among the bulk of workers. But they were capable of playing such a part only in the event of their activity being guided by militant proletarian organisations taking a consistently class position. Where that was absent, they almost always turned into a simple appendage of entrepreneurial power. Being compelled, under pressure from the working class, to recognise the right to worker representation in management, the bourgeoisie of a number of states very soon appreciated all the benefits that could accrue from integrating the worker representation agencies into their own system of power, from turning them into a screen of class rule. The principle of "cooperation" by these bodies with factory administration and restrictions on their ties with class organisations (for example, under the pretext of compulsory maintenance of industrial secrets or even non-participation in class conflicts) was stipulated in the legislation of some countries (West Germany, Sweden, etc.). In order to implement these principles intensified influence was exerted on worker representatives through direct bribery and psychological brainwashing.

In West Germany, where worker representatives on managerial bodies receive salaries that are immense by comparison with rank-and-file workers, there were frequent instances in the 50s and early 60s when they opposed the unions during class conflicts and threw in their lot with factory management. Factory committees came into being in Sweden in 1946, and production committees followed in 1966 with consultative functions; by agreement between unions and the employers' association they, on the one hand, supervised observance of work condition standards and, on the other, encouraged higher production efficiency and observance of labour discipline, keeping secret the economic information presented to them.

Naturally enough, in countries where adverse, conciliatory trends were particularly evident in the activities of worker representation bodies, there were many cases of their militant, class-conscious members using these bodies to safeguard the workers' interests. Nonetheless, the weakness of those agencies, rooted in opportunist positions of trade union and social democratic leadership, in that they were used for class collaboration, was becoming more and more obvious. As a result they became discredited among ordinary people: surveys carried out in the 60s in West Germany, Sweden and

¹ Quoted from: *World Marxist Review*, No. 9, 1966, p. 12.

elsewhere invariably showed that rank-and-file workers were largely indifferent to such a purely formal representation of their interests.

That by no means signified, however, that the economy democracy question was no longer a live issue. On the contrary, during the 60s and 70s its importance grew, especially with mounting working-class resistance to capitalist arbitrary action on the organisation of work at the enterprise. The workers endeavoured to rely on the agencies that represented them so as to prevent changes in the technology, resulting from the scientific and technological revolution, from being used to the detriment of the workers.

In the conditions of state-monopoly capitalism, decisions on specific issues concerning the workers' situation emanated more and more from state agencies of socio-economic control. Experience of the fight for socio-economic objectives led the labour movement to demand participation in tackling the questions associated with the state's economic policy—on capital investment orientation, credit policy, price policy and development of the state sector.

Defence of workers' interests dictated the need for a sharp intensification of influence over the activity of agencies that elaborated and carried out national socio-economic policy. This gave rise to the struggle for democratic nationalisation and democratic planning, which was gaining increasing popularity. With the development of European economic integration, the question of the organised working class also affecting the activity of international agencies of the EEC acquired a growing urgency.

Thus, the objective situation, the consolidation and manoeuvring of the class opponent confronted the labour movement with qualitatively new tasks. These tasks were vitally important for successful defence of the immediate and long-term socio-economic interests of the proletariat, as well as for the protection of its gains.

THE WORKING CLASS AND INTENSIFIED SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CONTRADICTIONS OF CAPITALISM

The parallel development of crises in the economy and in the socio-political sphere is a distinctive feature of capitalism's intensifying contradictions at the third stage of its general crisis. What marks it out from the 20s and 30s is that the sharp growth in socio-political instability is not everywhere bound up with an economic crisis. The worsening of several social problems, representing one of the most typical aspects of that process, was not averted by economic growth; moreover, it was to a large extent a result of the latter. Brought in by the scientific and technological revolution, the growth was in its goals, scope and trends determined by the laws

of the capitalist mode of production. Its effect on the sphere of mass consumption amounted mainly to offering those goods and services which created the most beneficial conditions for capitalist profit-making in production and sales. Those conditions existed above all in those sectors where scientific and technological progress and other factors (particularly neocolonialist exploitation of resources in the developing countries) gave the best chance to reduce production costs.

It was into sectors like production of everyday items and household comfort articles, synthetic clothing and consumer services, etc., that capital above all tended to flow, while the demand for their production was especially intensively whipped up by capitalist advertising. Using the powerful means of psychological manipulation, the modern mass media, capitalist business was able much more widely than ever before to apply the mechanism of "prestige consumption" by which a particular make of car or suit of clothes serves as an indicator of the social status of their owner. As a result, the formation of artificial needs, about which Marx had spoken and which is inherent in capitalism, substantially increased and took on a mass character.

Things were different with those consumer products whose sale at prices within range of the populace were at variance with the interests of rapid profit-making. Such a situation is typical of all those sectors of material production and service spheres in which costs of production are relatively high or show a tendency to grow. Prices of their output grew particularly quickly, and its accessibility lagging increasingly behind people's needs was a sharp contrast to the picture of abundance purportedly achieved in "consumer society."

A vivid example of such disproportion is housing for workers and the situation in health care in advanced capitalist countries.

Changes in the content of work and skills, engendered by the scientific and technological revolution, and the overall growth in mass cultural and intellectual requirements brought the problems of education to the forefront of economic and social affairs. Despite considerable growth in secondary (general and vocational) and higher education in capitalist countries, there was an increasing gap between opportunities and requirements. Complete secondary schooling by the end of the 60s was out of reach of many young people. In Western Europe only a minority of young men and women were able to complete their secondary education (27 per cent in France, 8.4 per cent in West Germany, 15 per cent in Sweden, 30.6 per cent in Belgium, 18.1 per cent in Italy in corresponding age groups).¹ At all levels of education, and especially higher, social

¹ UNESCO. *Factual Background Document on Access to Higher Education in Europe*, Paris, 1967, p. 13.

barriers remained, sharply restricting accessibility to young people from a proletarian background. In the developed capitalist states of Europe in the 60s workers' children made up between 5 and 25 per cent of students in higher education, and some 27 per cent in the USA. What is more, higher educational institutions, providing the fullest education and opening the way to highly-paid creative or leading work, wholly preserved their nature of socially privileged establishments and were practically closed to workers' children.

With the acceleration of scientific and technological progress, the problem of lack of conformity of the education system to economic needs and the labour market intensified. In a number of capitalist countries, as a consequence of a shortage of allocations, the curricula and training methods in secondary and higher education were restructured in no way sufficiently to adapt them to production needs. In those circumstances the growing stream of school- and college-leavers was largely chaotic; in some spheres the shortage of specialists grew worse, in others there was an overproduction of them (especially in the humanities).

At the same time another trend is apparent: the growing subordination of education, particularly technical, to the economic interests of monopolies led to a narrowing of specialisation; thereby the volume of knowledge being obtained sharply restricted opportunities for professional mobility, although the need for job changes during one's working life was more and more urgently being dictated by technological progress. Thus, the situation in education had an acutely adverse effect on problems of employment and the vocational prospects of wide social strata, on the security of their future. With the mounting economic difficulties and overall unemployment, such problems acquired an increasingly complex and dramatic character.

Capitalism's inability to resolve the problems engendered by economic and social development stemming from the scientific and technological revolution became increasingly manifest in most diverse areas. Contradictions of capitalist urbanisation had a dire effect on the everyday living conditions of workers. The crisis of the capitalist city, becoming in the late 60s one of the most painful social problems, was a complicated phenomenon combining chaotic urban building, the saturation of cities with individual car transport, noise reaching health-hazardous levels, the inadequate housing for the poorest sections of the populace, the overall air pollution, neglected nature of the urban economy and the growing crime rate. With the uncontrolled growth of cities, any elementary procedure for putting things right required planning in urbanisation and appropriate funding. However, private ownership of land and land speculation, the class nature of taxation and, in several countries, the outflow from the big cities to healthier suburbs by the

wealthier groups, all combined to hamper implementation of those sorts of measures. That was a vicious circle which led to a mounting deficit in urban budgets and to a progressive worsening of living conditions in the cities.

The worsening transport problem was particularly felt by urban-dwellers in the 60s and 70s. The capitalist economy, oriented on making huge profits out of the mass production of individual cars, had for decades neglected the development of public transport. That resulted in mounting difficulties for the population due to congestion of transport arteries, unproductive time-wasting in going to work and leisure centres and, thereby, increasing fatigue. In many instances the travelling nullified effectively any reduction in the work-day that had been obtained over several decades. The situation became even more dramatic with the exceedingly sharp, even against the background of overall price rises, increase in transport fares and, ever since the energy crisis, the fast-rising petrol costs for individual cars.

During the 60s and 70s the worsening ecological problem became one of the major factors intensifying capitalism's crisis state. Under the impact of the scientific and technological revolution, the scale of rapacious exploitation by capitalist production of the environment sharply increased. The loss of irreplaceable natural resources and damage to the ecological balance are creating a very real threat to the very basis of human life on earth. That is apparent from the truly catastrophic dimensions of air and water pollution by industrial waste, the destruction of natural scenery, and the energy, raw material and food crises.

For the working class, especially for the least provided for, exacerbation of the ecological problem means a direct worsening in its living conditions. When linked to the still unresolved problems of housing, urban life and transport, that problem acquired a particularly tragic nature in the overcrowded workers' quarters of the big cities and industrial areas. For example, in large cities of the USA, within areas with predominantly proletarian population the extent of air pollution is 3-4 times that in bourgeois districts.¹ In the late 60s and early 70s there were annually about half a million cases of toxic poisoning. Furthermore, the industrial proletariat is exposed to various harmful substances at work. In addition, the standard of living of large groups of workers sharply restricts access to recreation in healthy areas enjoyed by the wealthy classes. So for wide sections of the working class the ecological problem increasingly became a serious issue for their life and health, and for the

¹ Paul P. Craig and Edward Berlin, "The Air of Poverty", *Environment*, June 1971, Vol. 13, No. 5, p. 9.

future of their children. To avert further poisoning of the atmosphere, of rivers and seas, diminishing soil fertility and depletion of natural resources, environmental protection and conservation became an urgent need for the whole of society, particularly acute for the working class.

The ecological problem, just like the energy and raw-material problems, is among those global issues that affect the interests of all humanity. To resolve them there has to be extensive promotion of international scientific, technological and economic co-operation. At the same time, it is quite wrong for bourgeois scientists, ideologists and politicians to try to depict the ecological crisis as some ineluctable means of production growth in the age of the scientific and technological revolution. In reality the crisis has been the consequence of contradiction between the objective need for preserving and restoring the natural environment and the aims of capitalist production, its orientation on a rapid turnover of capital and maximum profit. The ecological problem can be resolved through setting up a long-term planning system that subordinates production development to the interests of entire society, but that task goes beyond the bounds of the laws of the capitalist mode of production.

The ruling circles in capitalist countries, recognising the acuteness of the ecological problems, have been unable to come up with sufficiently effective means of dealing with them. Theories proclaiming the holding back of economic growth and Malthusian measures for restricting population growth as a radical means of saving humankind have become widely popular. The practical conclusions from those theories nearly always boil down to tackling the problem at the expense of workers' living standards and consumption, without touching monopoly profits. Thus, restriction on economic growth is understood above all as a narrowing of mass consumption so as to reorientate monopoly capital on producing means for safeguarding the environment. Higher wages are said to be a hindrance to mobilising the means necessary for that. To control population growth it is proposed to cut family benefits. Despite the rapid rise in government and other organisations engaged in environmental protection, despite elaboration of appropriate legislation, the practical results of measures undertaken in that area are extremely limited and have not come near resolving the problem.

Exacerbation of social problems which capitalism has run up against in the course of the scientific and technological revolution and development of state-monopoly control has marked a new stage in intensification of its contradictions. Of course, the inadequate housing conditions, health service, the inequality in education and the difficulties of urban living have always been the lot of the workers under capitalism, and the scale of many of these has con-

siderably reduced when compared with the last century or the first decades of this one. Yet, the acuteness of social problems cannot be measured merely by quantitative yardsticks, by the statistics of various forms of material and cultural poverty. It depends on the entire development of society and social wealth and on conformity of various aspects of living conditions to its level.

The worsening of many social problems in the 60s and 70s stemmed, first, from the contradiction between possibilities for meeting social and individual needs engendered by the scientific and technological revolution and the particularly rapid rate of growth in those needs that it induced, on the one hand, and the increasing failure to satisfy them under capitalism, on the other.

Second, the worsening of capitalism's main contradiction became manifest with renewed vigour in social relations. The private mode of appropriation, by continuing to engender anarchy of production and economic instability, at the same time intensified disproportions between the various forms of consumption, hampered the development of social services necessitated by the scientific and technological revolution, by the ensuing shifts in socio-economic affairs and the upset balance between society and nature. The traditional deficiencies of capitalism were supplemented by mounting disarray in people's everyday life.

Third, the failure to resolve a number of urgent social problems was a major aspect of crisis in socio-economic regulation system established by state-monopoly capitalism. That system had proved not only unable to lend a really proportionate, stable character to development of the social sphere, but, moreover, estranged from society's genuine interests and needs.

During the 60s and 70s wide sections of the public in capitalist countries, including influential members of bourgeois science, began to appreciate the need for a much more vigorous state intervention in the promotion of social services; they realised the danger inherent in continued private business control and market anarchy. Many leading bourgeois and social-reformist politicians also recognised this. Presidents and prime ministers of capitalist states, the leaders of major parties and even representatives of the monopoly hierarchy (like John Rockefeller) were talking of the need to subordinate economic growth to "human" goals and proclaiming the "quality of life" slogan. In the 60s and early 70s a whole number of programmes were drawn up and adopted aimed in one way or another at putting things right in the social sphere. But the scope of those programmes far from corresponded to real needs, and, what is more, in many cases they were not carried out or went only half-way. The share of the relevant state allocations in the pre-crisis years either grew only slightly or even fell. For example, the pro-

portion of expenditure on education in the US state budget increased from 3.7 to 3.8 per cent between 1970 and 1974, from 6.6 to 8.1 per cent on health, from 1.5 to 1.8 per cent on housing and public amenity construction, and from 1.3 to 1.4 per cent on environmental protection. In West Germany the share of expenditure on public needs in the aggregate total of net capital investment fell from 34.5 per cent in 1950 to 29 per cent in 1972. In Italy state allocations under a 5-year programme for developing the infrastructure (1965-1970) were met only by 47 per cent in education and culture, by 45 per cent in health, and 47 per cent in public transport.¹

The narrowly class, anti-social nature of government regulation was particularly apparent in the correlation between military and social expenditure. The militarisation of the economy means the establishment of a stable market and conditions for obtaining maximum profits for the monopolies of the military-industrial complex. This is done at the expense of funds that could be used to meet urgent public needs. For example, the 1974 US budget, while fully revoking or substantially cutting back almost a hundred programmes for federal funding of housing construction and expanding hospitals and schools, envisaged an increase in military expenditure by 4.7 billion dollars.²

The biggest blow to plans to enhance the "quality of life" was dealt by the economic crisis of the mid-70s. In the crisis situation the state and monopoly striving at all costs to cut back expenditure on social needs and to hold the economy on tight reins as a prime means of anti-crisis policy further intensified.

The accumulation and intertwining of numerous economic and social problems, which characterise the development of state-monopoly capitalism, paved the way for a fresh exacerbation of class contradictions. Class inequality in all spheres of material and cultural affairs, of course, was nothing new in the history of capitalism, but under the influence of substantial shifts in production and consumption, in the structure and volume of requirements, it became much more perceptible and harder to tolerate than in the preceding periods. It was not only that income inequalities were preserved and intensified, but that in circumstances of rising national wealth and average living standards, low income sections of the population were deprived of vital services and conditions regarded as a necessary element in those standards. It was those sections that became the main victims of all kinds of economic and social disproportions, of the uneven development of various spheres. Capitalism's traditional problem of poverty acquired new contours:

¹ M. Bordini, N. Cacace, M. d'Ambrosio, *Contratti 12 e crisi economica*, Rome, 1972, p. 136.

² *The United States Budget in Brief. Fiscal Year 1974*, Washington, 1973.

from being an eternal evil, it turned into monstrous injustice; it was not the easing of poverty but its eradication as a social phenomenon that had become an ever more obvious and pressing need of social development. The problem was particularly acute in those circumstances in which destitution of the various groups of workers was intensified through racial, national or religious inequality (Blacks in the USA, foreign workers in Western Europe, Catholics in Northern Ireland), through the economic and social backwardness of many regions and the crisis in a number of industries and agriculture.

In the circumstances of economic growth even bourgeois politicians and scholars began to work out programmes for reducing poverty levels and incomes inequality. With the onset in the 70s of an economic crisis and unemployment, the islands of poverty began clearly to grow into continents, and the threat of hardship in all its multifarious forms hung over more and more sections of working people.

Material hardship and lack of provision for wide sections of the working class, however, were not the only causes of a sharpening conflict between workers and the capitalist system. A certain expansion of the workers' consumption, and an improvement in their legal status, interacting with social processes stimulated by scientific and technological progress, considerably weakened the traditional cultural isolation of the working class and strengthened its social status. This was apparent, too, in the proliferation of new forms of consumption and leisure, in the rising educational standards of workers and in their growing proximity to the mass of non-manual workers. The spread of the mass media (radio and TV) opened up access to the sources of cultural and socio-political information enjoyed by other social strata.

At the same time, changes in the structure of consumption and way of life of the working class made no impression on its status of inequality. Those relations continued to affect the whole totality of living conditions of the working people, and marked class barriers remained in all areas of life.

The specific forms that the process of rising educational and cultural standards among workers objectively took under capitalism inevitably intensified the problems caused by the working class' socially unequal status. That process was increasingly coming into obvious conflict with the low status and all-round dependence of the worker in production, with the extremely low opportunities he had for social and occupational improvement, with most workers being deprived of creativity and initiative in work.

In the USA in 1965, 40.6 per cent of skilled workers, 45.7 per cent of semi-skilled and 42.4 per cent of unskilled had general

and vocational school training of 8-11 years, and 37.9 per cent, 32.5 per cent and 23.3 per cent of 12 years.¹ So a considerable proportion of workers with a relatively high education were obliged to do unskilled and low-skilled jobs. Opportunities for their vocational improvement were normally extremely limited. In the words of a Parisian metal worker, "after 30 years we have no chance of any advancement, no personality development at work".² Such a situation is very typical outside France as well.

The rising social and cultural requirements of workers in circumstances of continuing class inequality have been a major requisite of the intensifying socio-political instability of state-monopoly capitalism and the crisis in the political and ideological supremacy that it created. The crisis has worsened also because of the enormous expansion of state functions and state incursion into economic and social spheres, unprecedented in peacetime, which has more and more vividly contrasted with its inefficiency, its inability to cope with economic disasters and social problems.

The crisis upset state-monopoly capitalism's finely-tuned mechanism of bourgeois political control over the common people. In a number of capitalist countries, especially in Western Europe and Japan, mass bourgeois parties (the CDU-CSU in West Germany, the UDR in France, the Christian Democrats in Italy and the Liberal Democratic Party in Japan) became an important element of that mechanism in the post-war period. In advocating a stimulation of economic growth and reforms aimed at a state-monopoly reconstruction of the economy and political mechanism, they were able to win support of the bulk of the intermediate strata and less politically advanced groups of workers. Having command over the decisive levers of state power and strong positions in parliament and being also closely associated with the leading monopolies, these parties played an important part in politically ensuring the long-term interests and stability of the monopoly bourgeoisie's class rule.

Elsewhere (the USA and Britain) the traditional two-party system performed the same tasks: periodical turns in power by the two bourgeois or a bourgeois and a social-reformist parties, similar in the scope of their mass influence, enabled them, by either stepping up or stepping down reformist manoeuvring in governmental policy, to ensure the stability of major orientations of state-monopoly policy. In yet another group of countries (Scandinavian, in particular) pursuance of the same course in its social-democratic variant

¹ N. P. Ivanov, *The Scientific and Technological Revolution and Questions of Training Skilled Personnel in Advanced Capitalist Countries*, Moscow, 1971, p. 77 (in Russian).

² Quoted in: *Socio-Political Shifts in Advanced Capitalist States*, Moscow, 1971, p. 57 (in Russian).

served as a form of ransom paid for preserving and fortifying the leading positions of the monopolies; here the tactics of social concessions and the close bond between political power and the hierarchy of the organised labour movement made it possible to subordinate the latter to the aims of state-monopoly capitalism. Finally, military-fascist dictatorships ensured political stability for the existing system in Spain, Portugal and Greece.

At the end of the 60s and in the 70s the mass social base of leading bourgeois parties dwindled and the coalitions they led disintegrated or lost support. The West German CDU-CSU had to cede power to a coalition of Social Democrats and Liberals; the French UDR and the Italian Christian Democrats lost votes and their ruling party prerogative was under serious threat. The two-party system began to falter noticeably: in the USA a third, and in Britain a quarter of the electorate in 1974 no longer supported either of the two major parties. The fascist regimes in Portugal, Spain and Greece crumbled under pressure from the mass struggle.

The worsening of social problems and the strengthening trend towards detente acted as factors intensifying in several countries the influence of Social Democratic parties. In West Germany, Britain, Australia and New Zealand they took the place of bourgeois parties at the helm of state. But that change did not last long: in the deepening economic crisis the social programmes of the Socialists were increasingly whittled away, and Social Democratic governments displayed just as much helplessness in fighting inflation and unemployment as the right-wing bourgeois and centrist parties when in government. In those conditions large groups of voters deserted the ruling Social Democratic parties that were to suffer defeat even in their traditional citadels—the Scandinavian states.

Political instability in the capitalist world increased in the mid-70s. It was evident in the fragility of government majorities in the parliaments of Britain, Italy and Japan, in the disintegration or inner debilitation of earlier-formed government coalitions (West Germany, Italy and France), in worsening internal party squabbles and conflict between the executive and the legislative power (the USA), in the frequent government crises and early elections. All these events in scope and significance went far beyond the bounds of the customary political struggle within the ruling camp: in a number of countries they were directly bound up with growing democratic and political opposition to state-monopoly policy, and on the whole they reflected the crisis state of capitalism's political superstructure, its inability to defuse mounting social discontent, to work out realistic ways to overcome growing economic difficulties and disproportions in social development.

Processes inherent in the evolution of the superstructure itself within state-monopoly capitalism also helped to deepen the political crisis. Stronger authoritarian trends in the executive power and an immense expansion of the state apparatus led to the development of bureaucracy and growing lack of control over state agencies. That was paving the way for corruption, embezzlement of public funds and the enhanced role of the police and intelligence services in the state mechanism. Spying and gangsterism were widely employed not only against democratic opposition; in the fight between bourgeois political groupings in a number of countries direct contacts were being established between criminal gangs and various links in the party-political mechanism. A series of political scandals, like the infamous Watergate and exposures of bribery of prominent bourgeois politicians in several countries by the American aircraft-building company Lockheed, exposed the whole depth of political amorality in bourgeois society.

Corruption and lawlessness are certainly not new phenomena in the history of capitalist political institutions. But with the state's extension of functions and responsibility under state-monopoly capitalism there has been a huge increase both in the opportunities for such practice and in the scale of its social consequences. The disorganising and demoralising effect of the corrupt and unrestrained (even by bourgeois law) state apparatus on economic and social life is acquiring truly catastrophic proportions with the sharply increased role of the state.

One result of all these processes is the growing discreditation of bourgeois political power and political institutions as a whole. In the mid-70s, in several leading capitalist states a record number of voters abstained from parliamentary and presidential elections. In the USA, for example, only about half the eligible voters turned out in 1974, 1976 and 1980. Public opinion polls made no bones about the fact that broad sections of the populace were more disenchanted than ever with the governing, with ruling parties and the whole existing political mechanism. Those moods permeated a substantial part of the middle strata comprising the traditional support for bourgeois policy. In 1974, for example, 55 per cent of surveyed Americans opined that people running the country were disinterested in the fate of ordinary citizens; 68 per cent reckoned that in the previous decade the administration had been constantly deceiving the public, and in the autumn of 1979 as many as 84 per cent declared that they were "dissatisfied with the way things are going with the United States at this time".¹

In a number of countries rising social discontent boiled over into

¹ *Public Opinion*, December/January, 1980, No. 1, Vol. 3, p. 8.

broad mass movements against the political course of ruling circles and acute socio-political crises.¹

The development of crisis processes in politics, whether expressed in open conflicts between mass democratic opposition and the incumbent power or in general destabilisation of the domestic political situation, was a factor in highlighting decisive fundamental issues concerning the objectives of the policy pursued, the interests it expressed and its relevance to popular needs.

The working class in such a situation was being squarely faced with the problem of ensuring an influence on the decision-making in national politics, the problem of gaining new, more meaningful positions in politics, of the fight for democratising government process and curbing monopoly power over society. The need to baulk the intrigues of open foes of democracy—the fascists and ultra-rights—dictated constant watchfulness. Utilising these forces as a reserve, the ruling class, in the event of a direct threat appearing to the capitalist system, as experience has shown, has not been squeamish about resorting to any methods. In safeguarding democracy, the working class rallied all sincere and honest campaigners against bourgeois dictatorship and oligarchy.

The vital interests of the working class and all working people required, however, more than defence of traditional democratic rights and institutions. State-monopoly capitalism and the rising public influence of the working class considerably altered the conditions of political activity in capitalist society. Governmental and semi-governmental agencies for socio-economic control, in whose work representatives of the organised labour movement were taking part, appeared in most capitalist states.

This participation became just as necessary a means of struggle as, for example, participation in parliament and local government. It enabled the organised working class to bring more pressure to bear on the formulation and implementation of socio-economic policy, to counterpose systematically and concretely alternative decisions expressing the workers' interests to political decisions advanced in monopoly interests, and to obtain the necessary information on the range of topics involved in it.

However, experience of the labour movement also testified to another development. Insofar as the genuine rights of worker representation in socio-economic decision-making on the state level is extremely limited and the agencies in which workers take part are predominantly only consultative, the results of the activity of worker representatives depend primarily on mass struggle. Only workers' organisations that are guided by class struggle principles are capa-

¹ See chapters 10 and 11.

ble of consistently maintaining connection with it. But if the activity of worker representatives is not subordinated to those principles, their participation in state bodies turns out to be a favourable breeding ground for conciliatory and opportunist tendencies, for forming a specific variety of trade union bureaucracy that fuses with state bureaucracy.

With the worsening of capitalism's socio-political crisis, the ruling state-monopoly hierarchy more and more vigorously aspired to use various joint, and particularly tripartite (the state—trade unions—employers) bodies and procedures for promoting neocorporatism—the system of political decision-making aimed at subordinating the organised labour movement to the principles of class collaboration, to the economic and socio-political objectives of monopoly capital. In theory and practice neocorporatism came to be seen as a political model intended to supplement or even replace the traditional “pluralist” democracy. It embodied authoritarian, anti-democratic tendencies of state-monopoly capitalism.

The developing situation demanded from worker organisations a clear-cut definition of the fundamental line of their activity. Either the conversion of the new rights into an instrument of fighting for a real restriction on and undermining of the power of the bourgeoisie, or collaboration with it, which would bolster the danger of integration into the system of that power, of becoming an appendage, an instrument of its influence on the workers. That was the alternative. However, both awareness of that alternative and mastery of the expanded methods of class struggle was never an easy thing; in many cases, especially in those sections of the labour movement where the influence of reformist or sectarian ideas has been strong, it came about only through protracted and arduous experience.

The socio-political crisis of capitalism put to doubt not only the effectiveness of bourgeois political activity as such, but also its guiding ideological norms and values.

The growth of monopoly capitalism into state-monopoly capitalism was accompanied by a fundamental ideological rearmament of the ruling class. By considerably extending its functions, making claim to the role of regulating economic and social affairs allegedly in the interests of the whole of society, the capitalist state needed ideological underpinning of that role. The mounting state intervention in class relations also led to a strengthening of ideological functions of bourgeois state policy, which became a paramount means of bourgeois ideological and psychological influence over the mass of the populace. During the post-WW II decades the capitalist state and the ruling class have on the whole widely relied on ideas and notions of bourgeois apologists renovated “in the spirit of the times”. Notions of “industrial society”, technocratic theories identify-

ing progress in technology and economy with social progress, "pluralism" that portrays the capitalist political system as harmonious and balancing out the countervailing class interests, etc., have all been used to spread the illusion of a radical transformation of the capitalist system, for masking the class essence of the capitalist state.

Crisis in the economic and social policy of state-monopoly capitalism, the growing credibility gap in its political system, have therefore signified bankruptcy of the most influential strains in bourgeois ideology and a serious deepening in the ideological crisis of capitalist society.

In the past, crisis phenomena in the ideological and spiritual sphere of capitalist society directly affected mainly relatively limited groups of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois intellectuals. During the 60s and 70s, the fall in standards and what appeared to be firmly established values, the loss of orientation directing personal consciousness and behaviour, acquired truly mass proportions. The cult of consumption and personal material success implanted by the pervasive apparatus of bourgeois ideology, the philistine consumer ideals and orientation on inferior standardised entertainment purveyed by "mass culture", have all resulted in the contemporary era in the most severe shocks to the psychological sphere of life. The anti-humane moral standards engendered by capitalist relations are coming into deep-going contradiction not only with the real situation of the common people, but with the mounting level of their intellectual requirements, with the lofty social ideals which the development of the world revolutionary process and the practice of socialist and communist construction are implanting into their consciousness. The insecurity and instability of the material situation, the narrowness of life prospects, the lack of employment for many young people, social inequality, mounting isolation and loneliness in a world governed by laws of individualism, profound moral dissatisfaction with the mindless, passive consumer existence, the inaccessibility for most people of a constructive, creative activity, and the overall nervous-psychological overstrain are all troubles that interweave and mutually supplement one another and engender crisis, unhealthy phenomena in morality, psychology and social behaviour of the individual. Their most blatant extrinsic expression is now the mass scale of crime, drug abuse, violence, nervous breakdowns, disintegration of elementary moral standards, social and individual passivity.

Personality crisis in bourgeois sociology is frequently depicted as a type of "global phenomenon", an ineluctable consequence of social change caused by technological progress. In actual fact those groups of people who oppose capitalist relations and are guided by

other—humane, collectivist, democratic and, especially, socialist—standards and ideals, by aspirations for genuine culture and knowledge, for social activity, preserve their moral values despite all the slings and arrows of outrageous capitalist fortune, and find within themselves strength to counterpose the baneful effect of capitalism's social atmosphere. The scale of the crisis phenomena in that area is bound up with the fact that fairly numerous social groups, both privileged and part of those exploited by capitalism, are not in a state to resist the aimlessness and emptiness of life governed by bourgeois standards, to oppose it with different standards.

During the 70s even leading ideologists of capitalism were beginning to recognise the connection between the spiritual crisis and bourgeois social relations. As the American sociologist Daniel Bell, the proponent of the "postindustrial society" theory, put it, free enterprise, consumer-oriented society no longer morally satisfied its citizens. All the basic postulates of capitalism's social philosophy, individualism first and foremost, faith in the ability of wealth to demolish all conflicts caused by inequality, were found to be wanting.¹

The worsening of capitalism's crisis did much to resuscitate and expand the set of problems facing the working class and labour movement of capitalist countries. Naturally, the working class in that situation was not a passive object of the crisis. Its campaign for living standards, for democracy, peace and social progress, was a major factor in the weakening of capitalism's social and political stability. At the same time, new elements in economic, political and spiritual life in capitalist society essentially changed the objective conditions of that struggle. On the whole those changes occurred in the following fundamental directions.

First, there was a considerable extension of the scope of specific tasks facing the labour movement in safeguarding workers' vital interests. The traditional struggle in defence of employment and living standards merged with the fight for development of social services corresponding to the objective requirements, the fight over problems arising as a result of environmental pollution and falling living conditions in the towns. Resistance to attempts by the ruling class to recover from economic difficulties at the workers' expense fused with the campaign against processes corroding social and personal life, the campaign for putting right and making healthy the economy, the way of life, morality, for a humanitarian and democratic alternative to the standards of bourgeois culture and mode of living.

¹ See Daniel Bell, *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism*, London, 1976, p. 249.

Second, in the crisis situation a politicisation of the problems of economic and social status of the working class and other workers' groups developed further. The numerous crisis phenomena were not only a consequence of the development of spontaneous processes immanent in capitalism, but also of the entire orientation of state policy.

The crisis simultaneously revealed both the inability of that policy to set right social and economic affairs, and its adverse effect on these affairs, associated with the growth in unproductive state expenditure, the stimulation of the arms race to the detriment of pressing social needs, with the neocolonialist approach to relations with the developing countries, and with restrictions on democratic liberties. Meanwhile, government regulation was used in every way possible by the ruling class to shift the burden of the crisis onto the shoulders of the working people. In those circumstances the labour movement was faced as never before with the tasks of opposing the whole range of orientations in bourgeois state domestic and foreign policy inimical to the popular interest. This required a specific and justified labour and democratic alternative to be advanced against the state-monopoly political course.

Third, the development of the labour movement in the crisis situation occurred in exceedingly acute and contradictory social and political circumstances. Exacerbation of an extensive range of socio-economic problems brought to life an upsurge in a whole number of democratic social movements: youth, national, women's, farmers', regional, various occupational, demographic and other social groups. The mass student movement played a particularly important part in the developing socio-political crisis in the USA and some other countries in the late 60s and early 70s; it highlighted not only the question of higher education, but also the aims of the government's foreign and home policy and the status of the individual under the state-monopoly system. Having intensified the ideological and political confusion in bourgeois and reformist parties, the crisis helped crystallise trends opposing the policy of the party hierarchy and insisting on wider account of popular demands in their policy.

All these phenomena reflected serious shifts in socio-political consciousness and behaviour of mass sections of capitalist society, leading to a leftward shift of the political axis and creating fresh opportunities for united action of workers and other democratic movements.

At the same time, expansion of the mass base of the anti-monopoly struggle confronted the labour movement with more than a few complicated political and ideological problems. The socially heterogeneous and to a large extent non-proletarian nature of many new democratic movements spawned extremely motley and amor-

phous platforms and ideological attitudes: from naive-utopian reformism to petty-bourgeois rebelliousness and anarchism. Unity between the working class and such movements required comprehensive account of the real needs and aspirations being expressed by the corresponding social strata, of their positive contribution to the general democratic struggle. In the meantime, there was much that was unacceptable to the labour movement in the ideology and forms of activity of these trends, particularly those of them which claimed some sort of exclusive role in the revolutionary struggle, which suffered from sectarian corporatism or nationalism, or even launched activity directed against proletarian class organisations.

In other words, in a situation of sharply expanding opportunities for an alliance between the working class and other democratic forces, the working class was faced with the complicated task of finding specific and appropriate ways to implement those possibilities, of building a sufficiently flexible and reliable system of allied relations with the numerous trends involved in the democratic struggle or capable of taking part in it.

That task became even more urgent since the crisis had far from exhausted the economic, social, political and ideological potential of capitalism. In particular, the crisis-induced discontent and disenchantment of wide sections of people, particularly the petty bourgeoisie, part of the white-collar workers, and the more backward groups of the working class, operated both as a factor in the growth of the democratic forces, and also created a really serious threat of expansion of the mass base of right-wing extremist and fascist tendencies. During the 70s these tendencies particularly came to life in the USA, Italy, West Germany and some other countries. The ability of the organised labour movement to head the struggle against the consequences of the crisis and curb the causes engendering it was of particular significance in repelling reaction and fascism.

Experience of the crisis more and more showed that, although the crisis phenomena and processes with which the working class had to cope developed under the impact of specific national conditions, they were interconnected in all countries of the world capitalist system, that both the national and internationally-organised monopoly capital stood opposed to the vital interests of the working people.

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Typical of the post-war period and particularly the 60s and 70s has been the considerably growing internationalisation of capital and economic affairs. The latest features of that internationalisation have appeared in the main on two very much interconnected levels:

the private monopoly and the state-monopoly. The internationalisation of capital on a private monopoly level is apparent in the further development of international monopolies, above all the transnational corporations (TNC). It is also evident in the establishment of a ramified system of connections and agreements among monopolies of various countries. It should be pointed out here that the great bulk of the biggest international monopolies are not multinational, as they are frequently termed in economic literature, but transnational—i.e. being the property of capitalists of a single country yet having their branches and firms in various countries. Only a few international concerns are multinational, belonging to and run by capitalists of different countries: for example, the British-Dutch Unilever and Royal Dutch-Shell, the Anglo-Italian Dunlop-Pirelli.

Typical of the internationalisation of capital on a state-monopoly level is the increasingly broad intervention by the state in the process of foreign economic links and relations, the creation of various integrational mechanisms, a system of inter-state agencies closely linked up both with national and international associations of monopolies.

Although the process of capital internationalisation on the two above-mentioned levels reflects the effect of a number of objective factors associated with the present-day development of forces of production, the major stimulus is the aspiration by monopolies to maximise profits and, ultimately, to step up exploitation of the workers.

In a relatively brief span the transnationals and the few really multinational corporations have occupied key positions within the world capitalist economy. Experts assessed that there were 650 international corporations in the early 70s. They accounted for 90 per cent of foreign investment, about a third of the capitalist world's gross national product, a half of foreign trade and 80 per cent of non-governmental expenditure on research. The 350 biggest of them alone accounted for over 23 million employees. The total volume of production in the foreign enterprises of the international, mostly transnational, corporations in the early 70s surpassed that of world capitalist exports. It also exceeded the GNP of any capitalist country with the exception of the USA. The international monopolies have become a sort of second power in the capitalist world.

In involving dozens of millions of workers in their sphere of exploitation, the transnationals have a strong and disorganising impact on the labour market. They create employment instability, first, when swallowing up local firms, by rationalisation and reduction of the work force usually carried out in these cases; second, through their narrow specialisation of firms in various countries and periodical change of specialisation; and, third, through their striv-

ing to transfer the burden of crisis and other economic difficulties to their foreign branches.

For the working class the fact that the decision-making centres of those corporations in many cases are very remote from the local branches creates great difficulties in the struggle against the transnationals. In many countries where their numerous firms are located, the transnationals are able to avoid direct confrontation with the national organisations of the working class when it comes to tackling important "centralised" issues.

By using their economic might, the transnationals undermine the efforts of national governments to control the economy. Moreover, they directly intervene in the political sphere, exerting a great influence on the domestic and foreign policy of the ruling circles in the "recipient countries". In doing so they come out as a stronghold of the most reactionary imperialist forces, opposing democratic liberties and the workers' social gains, as well as the national sovereignty of many states. Their interests are often the driving factor behind foreign intervention in the internal affairs of those countries where their firms are located. As was noted at the Brussels Conference of Communist Parties of the Capitalist Countries of Europe in 1974, transnationals "support the most reactionary and most authoritarian trends, including fascist trends".¹ A number of them were directly involved in the overthrow of the Allende democratic government and support of reactionary, dictatorial regimes in Chile and other Latin American countries, the extreme right wing in Portugal, Francoism in Spain, the right-wing ultras in France, the neo-fascists in Italy and West Germany, the most reactionary political trends in the United States, etc. They invariably oppose democratic forces, striving to prevent left parties coming to power. This happened in Italy in 1976 when the Exxon and Mobile corporations financed right-wing press organs and the banking transnationals announced their readiness to take part in a credit blockade of the country in the event of Communists entering the Italian government. In Britain, they financed the Conservatives drawing up and adopting anti-worker legislation in 1971, and its replacement by a Labour government provoked a threat to take their capital out of the country. Many more examples could be adduced of transnationals' interference in the internal affairs of various countries, invariably in support of reactionary forces and against the interests of the working class and general national interests.

The rise of the international monopolies, particularly the transnationals, presents an ever greater threat to the working class and the labour movement. Their enormous financial, productive and

¹ *Comment*, Vol. 12, No. 6, March 23, 1974, p. 72.

economic power; their penetration into dozens of countries; their ability to affect very substantially individual national economies, to go a long way to directing their development and, if they need, to disorganise those economies; the mobility that enables them swiftly to switch capital and production from one country to another in their struggle with the organised working class (and, if necessary, with national governments as well); their mounting intervention in state policy, normally for reactionary purposes; and, finally, the deliberate course of stepping up exploitation of the working class, splitting it, suppressing or subordinating its organisations, all make them an unprecedentedly strong and dangerous foe of the proletariat.¹

* * *

State-monopoly integration is a special, higher degree of development of the internationalisation of capital and economic affairs. It is expressed in the merging of national economies of various countries into regional economic complexes and it implies the collective intervention of several states into the process of economic relations between nations. The fullest expression of this has been in the European Economic Community which currently covers 10 countries (France, West Germany, Belgium, Holland, Luxembourg, Italy, Great Britain, Ireland, Denmark and Greece). The West European monopolies have been the major moving force behind the internationalisation of economic life in the form of integration. Integration has expanded trade and the movement of capital among the West European states. These processes have stimulated a great influx of foreign, mainly American, capital into Western Europe, the extensive diffusion of a network of American transnational branches and, at the same time, more vigorous capital investment by West European companies beyond the EEC, largely in the United States. As a result, a complex knot of mutual dependence and contradictions has appeared.

State-monopoly circles in EEC member states have set themselves a prime task of consolidating their forces in the form of integration to elaborate common economic and social strategy and tactics on the scale of the whole regional grouping, to ensure conditions of uninterrupted exploitation, to make an assault on workers' rights and to combat the democratic and labour movement. These class objectives lay behind the plans of the Common Market initiators in setting up, as a complement to the economic and currency union, some sort of European community in which the antagonistic class

¹ For more detail see Chapter 9.

contradictions would be mollified, the labour movement would be channelled into a reformism harmless to capitalism, and a class peace would be established between "social partners".

The EEC instigators put forward the Rome Treaty social programme as a major means of attaining those objectives. The programme was predominantly demagogic, proclaiming the need to ensure full employment (through forming a common market of labour power as a result of its free movement and of measures on work placement for people deprived of jobs owing to structural changes in the economy), better working conditions, vocational training, social insurance, assistance in developing backward areas and, finally, "harmonisation" of the social security systems and wage levels. In actual fact, however, integration has affected the social sphere least of all. The 60s witnessed the utter passivity of leading EEC bodies as well as EEC member state governments to carry through the 1957 Rome Treaty social programme.

But in the early 70s, under the impact of political events in France in 1968 and in Italy in 1969, spurred on by the rise in social tension in other countries, the attitude of EEC leading bodies to the common social policy began to change. From 1971 there was some expansion of activity of the Social Fund, which had been set up back in 1960, one of its aims being a better use of the work force and its higher mobility. From 1975 a Regional Fund started to operate, designed for helping poverty-stricken areas, and a number of other measures intended to alleviate the very acute employment problem and growing unemployment were mapped out. In 1972 a decision was taken to work out by early 1974 a Social Action Programme obligatory for all EEC members. But already by 1973 an EEC commission had come to the conclusion that it was impossible to establish any common and compulsory broad programme and confined it merely to a few specific objectives, such as the levelling out of certain working conditions, the implementation of equal pay for men and women, and individual measures in employment and vocational training, mainly through extending Social Fund activity and setting up an ad hoc European Centre for Leisure and Education. But that widely heralded new common social programme also turned out to be unrealistic even in abbreviated form.

During the crisis and years of unfavourable economic situation that followed it in Western Europe even the very principle of "harmonisation" of social conditions was put to doubt. The EEC ruling circles began to talk merely about the need to harmonise and bring closer national measures that would bring up the social conditions of lagging countries to some acceptable standard through persuasion, but not through the introduction of compulsory decisions.

The trend towards the levelling out of wages, social benefits and general working conditions provoked by the internationalisation of production and new demands on the work force (and, consequently, on conditions of its reproduction), associated with scientific and technological progress and change in economic structures, was uneven in both time and country. During the years of a favourable economic situation the gains of the working class in a particular country of the Community in various areas of social life were extended to other countries as well. On the other hand, with a downturn in the economic situation, and especially following on the 1974-1975 crisis, the trend towards levelling out declined and there was a strengthening of the opposite trend—to preserve and even intensify the differences in living standards between the wealthiest and most backward and poorest regions, between the various categories of workers within the EEC on the whole and in each individual country. In spite of promised full employment, unemployment began rapidly to grow and turned into an exceedingly acute social problem.

On the whole the experience of the 70s demonstrated that the social policy of EEC agencies was incapable of becoming a decisive factor in diminishing the regional differences in living standards and even less in alleviating the adverse consequences for working people of the structural shifts in the economy, the arbitrary behaviour of the transnational monopolies and the consequences of economic crises.

* * *

The worsening of socio-economic and political contradictions in the advanced capitalist countries, the consolidation and manoeuvring of the class enemy at national and international level, set the labour movement qualitatively new tasks in the fight both for immediate and for the long-term interests of the proletariat.

Chapter 8

THE MASS LABOUR MOVEMENT IN THE LATE 1950s AND EARLY 1960s

THE LABOUR MOVEMENT SWITCHES FROM DEFENCE TO ATTACK

Already in the late 50s, the socio-economic changes caused by the ongoing scientific and technological revolution and state-monopoly reconstruction of capitalist society produced objective conditions for a fresh upsurge in the labour movement. A serious shift in the overall balance of power in the world created favourable international conditions for the working class in capitalist states to go on to the offensive, which became a major factor in the commencement of the third stage in capitalism's general crisis. The difficult period of a decline in the labour movement, its surrender of certain positions under pressure from reaction, was now in the past.

The first signs of revival in the labour movement may be traced back to the late 50s. It was evident in an upsurge in the trade union movement and the strike struggle, and in a marked leftward swing in various sections of the working class: a number of unions took a more resolute anti-monopoly stand and the influence of Communist parties among the masses gained ground in some countries.

The labour movement's switch to the offensive started in all the major regions of the capitalist world. In Japan, the total number of organised actions, including strikes, and the number of their participants grew after the adoption in 1955 of concerted struggle of the "spring offensive" by various sections of the working class. In 1958 elections to the lower house of parliament showed a fall in influence by the ruling Liberal Democratic Party and success for left parties, not only the Socialists but, for the first time after 1949, of the Communists as well. The Communist Party began to recover after the blows it had suffered during the purge of reds at the start of the 50s. While before 1958 the influence of Japanese Communists at the polls had fallen for several years (9.8 per cent of the vote in 1949, 2.5 in 1952, 1.9 in 1953 and 2.0 in 1955), it began to pick up steadily from that year (2.6 per cent in 1958, 2.9 in 1960, 4.0 in

1963, and 4.8 per cent in 1967), which paved the way for more marked successes during the 70s.¹

A major strike by 500,000 steel workers in the USA in 1959 was marked by uncommon persistence—it lasted 116 days and ended only after direct government intervention.

In the late 50s, after the establishment in Canada (1956) of a new trade union centre, the Canadian Labour Congress, the strike movement began to get off the ground there too. Most strikes were persistent and long drawn-out. At the same time the campaign intensified against US union leaders' interference in the internal affairs of Canadian unions.

A fresh upsurge in the strike movement began in 1959 in Italy. While in 1957 and 1958 the number of strikers amounted respectively to 1,227,000 and 1,283,000, and the number of idle hours was 37 million and 33.4 million, in 1959 there were as many as 1,900,000 people on strike in 1959 and 2,338,000 in 1960, while the number of idle hours had increased respectively to 73.5 million and 46.3 million.² During the strikes there were hopeful signs of concerted action by the three trade union confederations and the mass entry into the struggle of young people.

Belgium witnessed a stormy strike of Borinage miners in 1959; they were protesting at the closure of mines and sackings. Here, the demand for structural reforms, i.e. decisive economic, social and political changes, rang out for the first time. There was a marked shift leftwards in the stand of the *Fédération Générale du Travail de Belgique* (FGTB). It called for a curb on monopoly power and drew up a programme of structural reform that envisaged the nationalisation of several industries and various forms of worker participation in factory management.

The strike movement also grew in the late 50s in Britain. In 1958 public figures associated with the left wing of the Labour Party founded the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. As a protest against nuclear armaments the British peace-fighters held a march from the atomic research centre of Aldermaston to London. Ever since, the annual Aldermaston marches became a tradition. The trade unions were steadily drawn into the anti-war campaign. The influence of right-wing leaders was gradually being eroded (thus, at the head of the largest British union—that of the Transport Workers—was now the left-winger Frank Cousins, though the post had long been the preserve of right-wingers). This strengthened the activity of the left within the Labour Party itself.

¹ *White Papers of Japan 1969-70. Annual Abstract of Official Reports and Statistics of the Japanese Government*, Tokyo, 1971, pp. 356-57.

² *Annuario statistico italiano 1961*, p. 335.

In the spring and summer of 1958 the Movement Against Atomic Death in West Germany achieved a great deal of popularity, it involved social democratic, communist and non-party workers and the best representatives of the creative intelligentsia, all demanding renunciation of plans to give the Federal Republic atomic weapons and agitating for support of the Rapacki Plan for an atom-free zone in Europe. The country witnessed a rash of anti-war strikes and demonstrations, all of which made a considerable contribution to the struggle against West German remilitarisation. In heading this movement, not without some hesitation, right-wing leaders of the Social Democratic Party and the trade unions employed all their influence to curtail it as soon as possible. All the same, these mass actions played a part in the process of latent accumulation of those feelings among the West German public that were to lead to a change in the country's foreign policy.

At the end of the 50s, thanks to communist backing, the Swedish Social Democratic government got a series of socio-economic reforms passed by parliament. They included the introduction of the most progressive pension system in the capitalist world. During the fight for those reforms Swedish Communists managed to overcome sectarianism within their ranks and launched a far-reaching campaign for working-class unity.

The further development and renovation of the strategy and tactics of the international communist movement became the most important event in its consequences for the labour movement during that period. The Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the congresses of fraternal parties, the international meetings of representatives of Communist and Workers' parties all subjected to profound analysis the new conditions of development of the world revolutionary process resulting from the formation and strengthening of the system of socialist countries; they drew conclusions that enriched Marxist-Leninist theory and helped to overcome dogmatism and sectarianism. Many complex issues were tackled in a creative and new way. These included the further worsening of capitalism's general crisis, peaceful coexistence as a special form of class struggle, the relationship between the struggle for democracy and that for socialism, the extending of working-class alliances, etc. At the same time, it was no easy process for the international communist movement to overcome dogmatic and sectarian extraneous features of the preceding period.

The proletariat of France, one of the most militant contingents of the working class in advanced capitalist countries, conducted its fight in difficult circumstances. The Fourth Republic's parliamentary regime was going through a deep-seated crisis. Removal of Communists from participation in the government had considerably weak-

ened left-wing opposition within the National Assembly. Taking an anti-communist position, the Socialist Party (SFIO) leadership and that of the Party of Radical Socialists united with right-wing bourgeois parties and rejected all communist proposals for concerted action.

Growing political instability expressed in frequent cabinet changes, the declining role of parliament and the split in the left-wing forces all combined to facilitate actions by reactionaries orientated on authoritarian methods of governing the country.

The process of consolidation of right-wing forces markedly accelerated in the situation that came to a head in the late 50s over the colonial question. Attempts by imperialist circles to halt the inevitable process of disintegration of the colonial empire led to protraction of wars and a heavy burden placed upon the workers. The stepping-up of reactionary, anti-democratic trends and the striving to establish a "strong power" were also the bourgeoisie's response to the mounting resistance by colonial peoples.

Clearly appreciating the danger the reactionaries represented when given leeway, the Communists insistently sought to unite the democratic camp. At the 1956 parliamentary elections a majority of the electorate voted for Communist and Socialist candidates. Despite the refusal by the Socialist leader Guy Mollet to include Communists in the new government, the French Communist Party supported all of its major socio-economic measures. Yet the inability, and to a large extent the unwillingness of Guy Mollet's government to tackle the sharply aggravating Algerian problem in a democratic way forced the Communist Party to go into opposition.

The Communists could not avoid the establishment in 1958 of the personal power regime which was a concentrated expression of the rule of monopoly capital. Socialists, having deepened the split in the working class, now backed the new government of Charles de Gaulle. In the new circumstances, only the Communist Party continued consistently to defend the interests of the workers, but the confusion among part of the population following the 1958 events hampered its activity. The hitherto politically fragmented bourgeois forces were now consolidated owing to the formation of the Gaullist Party—the Union pour la Nouvelle République (subsequently the party was to be renamed Union des Démocrates pour la République—the UDR).

The obvious shift of some Social Democratic parties to bourgeois reformism was another worrying event of those years. The programme adopted by the Social Democratic Party of Germany at Bad Godesberg in 1959 became the banner of Social Democracy's "new frontiers." Right-wing Labour Party leaders in Britain headed by Hugh Gaitskell earnestly sought to revise the Party programme and

turn the Party from its socialist objectives. The Italian Socialist Party led by Pietro Nenni, which had for long stood on the extreme left of international Social Democracy, was moving swiftly to the right, renouncing co-operation with Communists.

So at the end of the 50s the overall picture of the labour movement in advanced capitalist countries was quite contradictory. It soon became evident, however, that signs of a new upsurge reflected the spirit of the age better than the difficulties or contradictions, no matter how serious.

It is hardly surprising that even in those countries where the working class was experiencing serious setbacks in the late 50s, their effect turned out to be relatively limited. Despite the setback to the French labour movement in 1958, the most politically aware section of the French working class continued to support the Communist Party, and the Party preserved the major contingent of its voters. Further, the CGT remained the leading trade union centre, with as many as 60 per cent of workers voting for its candidates at workplaces even in the early years of the Fifth Republic.¹

It ought to be noted, also, that the rightward swing of Italian Socialists did not restrain Italian workers from greater mass struggle, just as the evolution of Gaitskell and other right-wing leaders to bourgeois reformism was unable to prevent actions by British Labour Party and trade union members for nuclear disarmament.

A marked enlivening of the labour movement in capitalist countries began in 1960. On February 1, 1960 as many as 11 million French workers took part in a strike against yet another attempted putsch by Algerian ultras. This testified to a swift revival of the militant spirit and urge for unity among the wide masses of workers. Force Ouvrière and the Christian unions were obliged to support the CGT in organising the strike.

Even more tempestuous events occurred in Japan in May and June of 1960. One of the most important directions of Japanese workers' political struggle for several years had been the fight against the US-Japan Security Treaty which had made the country dependent on American imperialism's foreign policy. The struggle flared up with particular force in the late 50s and early 60s over plans by US-Japanese reaction to revise the Treaty and bolster its aggressive content. The National Council for Struggle Against "Security Treaty" Revision was set up in late March 1959 by concerted efforts of various sections of Japanese democracy. It incorporated representatives of the Communist and Socialist parties, the SOHYO and CHURITSU ROREN trade unions and over 100 other organisations.

¹ *Le Nouvel Observateur*, December 3, 1978, p. 46.

More than 20 powerful united actions took place during 1959-1960 under the Council's aegis.

A powerful political strike swept the nation on June 4, 1960, involving 5.6 million, the overwhelming majority of all organised workers. On June 15 and 22 the country was shaken by even stronger political strikes (in each of which some 6 million people took part). Such an unprecedented scale of political protest by workers forced the Kishi government to resign and the US President to cancel his visit to Japan. That was a great victory for the forces of democracy and the labour movement.

By infringing elementary parliamentary standards Japanese and American reactionaries managed to secure ratification of the Mutual Security Treaty. However, experience of struggle against it was extremely important for the further development of the labour movement. The struggle was unprecedented in the scope of concerted action by all the major sections of Japanese democracy. In the course of it the proletariat enhanced its class consciousness and strengthened its determination in the defence of its interests.

Hardly had the events in Japan died down than Italian workers took up the struggle coming out with anti-fascist slogans against police reaction. The worsening situation was due to the crisis in the centrist government policy pursued since 1947 and aimed at slowing down urgent reforms. In the situation of rapid socio-economic change, this policy was clearly unable to satisfy either the mounting demands of the workers or the requirements of economic development which was clashing with the glaring disproportions between industries and geographical zones (especially between North and South).

Influential circles of the Italian ruling class tried to find a way out of the political crisis by stepping up reactionary measures. The one-party Christian Democratic government of Fernando Tambroni, formed in April 1960 and having neofascist parliamentary backing, endeavoured to respond to the incipient rise in strike struggle by stern repression. It was moving fast towards actually establishing a clerical police regime. The attempt by the authorities to ensure the convocation of the congress of the neofascist party, the Italian Social Movement (MSI), in Genoa, a city proud of its part in the Resistance movement, was an open challenge to democratic forces. Unexpectedly for reactionaries, however, the attempt came up against strong and concerted opposition, above all from the working class, but also from the democratic intellectuals and the poor in the South. For the first time since 1947-1948 diverse political forces who had participated formerly in the Resistance took part in the united front, from Communist to left-wing Catholics. Besides organisations of the Communist Party and the General Union of

Italian Workers, resuscitated local Resistance councils, with a broad spectrum of public representatives, played an outstanding part in leading the struggle.

Mass strikes and stormy anti-fascist demonstrations prevented the MSI congress in Genoa. Thirsting for revenge, the Tambroni government sent in large police forces against the demonstrators. Thirteen people were shot and killed in attacks on demonstrators in Regio Emilia and other cities. This provoked an explosion of popular fury and brought the country to the brink of civil war. Everywhere popular protest was turning into street skirmishes with the police.

The Communist Party did all it could not only to organise resistance, but to set precise and attainable goals for the movement and to avert possible provocation. On July 17, 1960 the Tambroni government was forced to step down. The new government pledged to observe democratic laws. Even more important, however, were the more far-reaching consequences of this defeat of reaction. The shift to the right for Italian ruling circles was closed for many years. The preservation of democratic rights and institutions and the shift in the balance of power towards the working class made it possible in the early 60s to launch a successful struggle to extend workers' gains. The ruling Christian Democratic Party had to give up co-operation with right-wing forces and to agree to the formation of a left-of-centre government with socialist participation, pledged to a programme of reform.

Just as tempestuous and even more unexpected for the ruling circles were the events in late 1960 and early 1961 in Belgium. A general strike paralysed the country, where the living standards were among the highest in Western Europe and where reformists had traditionally held tight reins within the labour movement.

Behind the events lay the social consequences of restructuring taking place in the Belgian economy under the impact of the scientific and technological revolution and the country's integration within the Common Market. The crisis in old traditional industries such as coal, textiles and iron and steel had led in capitalist anarchic conditions to rising unemployment and the decline of entire regions. What aggravated the situation was the striving of the ruling class to shift onto workers the costs associated with the loss of colonial possessions in the Congo. The immediate cause of the strike was the introduction into parliament of the so-called *loi unique* intended to increase indirect taxation, freeze wages, raise pensionable age, etc.

The strike was in some degree prepared by the strike movement of previous years (the already mentioned Borinage miners' strike in February 1959 and a one-day stoppage in January 1960) and by

certain positive shifts in the country's mass worker organisations. Under the influence of the FGTB trade unions, the Belgian Socialist Party adopted a programme of structural reforms. The left wing strengthened within the socialist movement. Defying the passive stand taken by the Party's and the FGTB's right-wing leadership, the socialist left, in some areas acting jointly with Communists, effectively organised the general strike. The latter continued for more than a month (December 20, 1960 to January 23, 1961) and embraced the country's major centres. Demands were voiced in the movement not only to have the *loi unique* revoked and to force the government to resign, but also to get structural reforms implemented.

The lack of working-class unity combined with the reformist influence weakened the movement's effectiveness. Yet despite the strikers' failure to stop adoption of the *loi unique*, the protests in the winter of 1960-1961 had a great impact. They opened the way for a protracted period of socio-political crisis in Belgium.

The 1960 events in such diverse capitalist countries as Japan, Italy and Belgium had certain common traits. Above all they had an explosive character, they were fast developing, involving within a few days and weeks wide masses of people in the struggle (6 million in Japan, 2.5 million in Italy, 1 million in Belgium). All of that very convincingly rebutted the myths that class contradictions were a thing of the past and that social peace was now on the way.

Another distinguishing feature that united mainly the July events in Italy and the great strike in Belgium was that they had far-reaching consequences. For Italy, for example, the 60s as distinct from the 50s became a time of a certain, though contradictory, shift to the left, the proclaiming of a reform programme and the weakening of anti-communism in internal politics. In Belgium the flare-up of fierce class struggle in 1960 and 1961 forced the ruling circles to take measures to limit the social consequences of capitalist anarchy.

Both in Italy in Belgium the working class exerted a vigorous effect on the internal political situation and forced the ruling class to manoeuvre.

The further course of events differed in the countries affected by the stormy conflicts of 1960. Undoubtedly, the differences in the balance of forces within the labour movement played no small part. In Italy Communists enjoyed overwhelming influence in the working class and in Japan the same holds good for the Socialist Party, which despite all its vacillations continued to take a left stand. In Belgium, however, the Socialists holding the leading position pursued an openly reformist policy.

Belgium in the first part of the 60s, despite the fairly numerous

strikes, had no mass actions comparable to the great strike. The continuing acuteness of the situation was apparent mainly in mounting contradictions within the ruling class, in a certain expansion of Communist and left-socialist influence and, especially, in that the ethnic question, that of self-government of the two ethnically distinct areas of the country, Wallonia and Flanders, came to the fore. In Japan, on the other hand, after 1960, too, the mass struggle of the working class remained at a high level. But it was in Italy that the greatest measure of success was attained: in 1962 and 1963 the working class launched an extensive and successful offensive in safeguarding its socio-economic interests.

The normal round of signing new collective agreements acquired fundamental importance in Italy in 1962. The formation in February that year of the first left-of-centre government encouraged the workers to advance their demands more energetically. What is more, for the first time the workers received wide support for their slogan of extending union rights at workplaces.

The strike movement was developing in a tense atmosphere and became drawn out. It was the 1.2 million engineering workers who played the leading role; their actions continued from June 1962 to February 1963. For the first time since the mid-50s Italy's biggest concern, FIAT, was hit by a strike. That strike was a baptism of fire for the numerous workers who had emigrated from the South and agrarian regions.

The engineering workers' strike was crowned with considerable success. Besides the substantial rise in wages, a shorter working day and equal pay for men and women, the workers gained rights for unions to have a say in regulating bonuses, piece rates and the skill rating system. More than a million workers in other industries followed the example of the engineering workers and made similar gains that year.

In France, under the impact of the defeat of 1958, anti-communist prejudices and reformist illusions shared by part of the workers began steadily to give way to a more sober understanding of events in the early 60s, which created the objective basis for future concerted actions by the working class. The fight against the colonial war in Algeria and the associated outburst of right-wing extremist ultra forces played a decisive part in re-establishing working-class fighting efficiency (and simultaneously the first successes on the way to overcoming the split in its ranks. The firm and consistent stand taken by the Communist Party in directing the working class' efforts at defending people's democratic gains began to bear fruit. Already the 11 million-strong strike on April 22, 1961 protesting at the latest putsch by the ultra-right in Algeria showed that the people had resurrected their spontaneous desire for unity.

But it was the following year, 1962, when a new upsurge in the labour movement began.

On February 7, 1962 the police in Paris broke up a peaceful demonstration against actions by the OAS ultra-right terrorists, and 8 men were killed. Six days later, on the day of the funeral, a national protest strike was called and a vast demonstration took place in Paris in which over a million people participated.

The government was forced urgently to take steps to put an end to the war in Algeria that had split the ruling class and aggravated the situation within the nation. Following the February events, talks were renewed with the Algerian National Liberation Front that headed the fight against colonial enslavement. The talks ended in the conclusion on March 18 of a peace treaty at Evian (known as the Evian Agreements). France now recognised Algeria's independence.

The Evian Agreements marked a great victory for France's democratic forces. The colonialist ultra-reactionaries within the country had suffered a resounding defeat. The end to the war in Algeria established a more propitious situation for the struggle of the French working class.

Already back in the autumn of 1961 (October 26-27 and November 28) employees of nationalised enterprises were out on strike; more than 500,000 people took part in each action. After peace in Algeria the strike movement gained momentum: in April, May and June brief general strikes by workers in state enterprises took place. But they produced extremely limited results, demonstrating that under the Fifth Republic the state was a much stronger adversary than any of the largest monopolies. Experience of the initial years of the strike struggle in those circumstances revealed that to break through the united front of employers and the state it was not enough to have separate, even large-scale working-class actions; what was needed was the support of the whole working class and the widest sections of the public.

Popular understanding of that had its effect during the miners' strike that began on March 3, 1963. The government had provoked the miners into action, reckoning on giving a lesson to the unions with the aid of a specially adopted anti-strike decree. The head-on clash that began very quickly turned from a strike of a purely industrial nature into a serious tussle between the working class and the personal power regime. The solidarity movement with the miners that grew to national proportions gave the strikers substantial material backing (2 billion old francs) and enabled them to hold out for 35 days. The government was forced to retreat. By the agreement made on April 4, miners' wages were raised (over the following 12 months) by 12.5 per cent.¹

¹ *L'Humanité*, April 4, 1963, p. 4.

The miners' example inspired hundreds of thousands of workers in the nationalised and private sectors to stand up and fight. In 1963 the number of days lost to strikes sharply rose—6 million as compared with 1.9 million in 1962.¹

The rise in the mass struggle and the need for consolidated opposition to the centralised state-monopoly apparatus raised the question of re-establishing relations between the major labour organisations and achieving unity of the left. United action by the country's largest unions was facilitated by the evolution that had been made by the French Confederation of Christian Workers (CFTC). Shifting much more leftwards under the influence of the commencing rise of the labour movement, this second biggest union centre in the country broke its links with the Church in 1964, proclaimed the principle of secularity and autonomy from any political party and adopted the name Confédération Française Démocratique du Travail (CFDT). This evolution enabled the CGT in 1965 to initiate successful talks on concerted action. The talks ended on January 10, 1966 with the signing of a joint declaration. Thereby a serious step forward was made along the road to re-establishing union joint action.

In the first part of the 60s there commenced a slow, intricate process of Communist and Socialist rapprochement. Pre-election pacts had been concluded between the two parties in several constituencies prior to the second round of voting in the 1962 parliamentary election. Guy Mollet, General Secretary of the Socialist Party, for the first time, called upon the electorate to vote in the second round for Communists if opposed to a member of the ruling UNR. The tactics of joint action, pacts and mutual withdrawal of candidates enabled the major opposition parties to strengthen their influence within parliament. The Communists now had 41 seats instead of the 10 they had had in 1958, while the Socialists now had 67 seats, 24 more than in the previous parliament.

The 1962 parliamentary elections were a turning-point both in the political evolution of the Socialist Party and in its relations with the Communist Party. Switching by that time from backing de Gaulle to unequivocal condemnation of the personal power regime, the Socialist Party leadership took account of the election results and had to admit the need for rapprochement with the Communists.

The setting up in 1965 of the Federation of the Democratic and Socialist Left (FGDS) in which the Socialist Party had a major hand was an important step towards consolidating the democratic camp. François Mitterrand, chairman of the new federation and lead-

¹ *L'Usine Nouvelle*, No. 17, April 27, 1972, p. 79.

er of the small left-of-centre party, the Democratic and Socialist Union of Resistance (UDSR), was put nominated candidate in the 1965 presidential elections. Mitterrand's programme advocated campaigning against the personal power regime, re-establishing and promoting democracy, and carrying out socio-democratic reforms in the workers' interests. Taking into consideration that Mitterrand's platform was close on many points to the Communist Party position, Communists decided to support him for presidency. The importance of united action was confirmed by the fact that even in the first round of voting the left opposition candidate was way ahead of all of de Gaulle's rivals, gathering 32 per cent of the vote, with 45 per cent in the second round. General de Gaulle was elected president only in the second round, obtaining 55 per cent of the votes (whereas he had obtained 62 per cent in the 1962 referendum). The backing for Mitterrand from the Communist and Socialist parties for the first time in many years showed people the potential of the left in changing the country's politics.

All the same, the rapprochement of Communists and Socialists was neither strong nor complete, it went no further than concerted action on specific issues and was not formulated in any manifesto pact.

The rapprochement process of the left was beginning in Finland as well. An important turning-point was 1963: the left wing advocating co-operation with Finnish Communists carried the day at the Social Democratic Party Congress. Väinö Tanner, a war criminal, was replaced as Party Chairman by Rafael Paasio. Changes in the Party's leadership and policy opened up fresh prospects for working-class unity. The policy of united action long pursued by the Communists now began to bear fruit.

Simultaneously with Italy, France and Japan, there were clear signs of the rise in the labour movement in countries under right-wing and dictatorial regimes.

The growth of the strike movement in Greece led to stormy demonstrations in 1963 provoking the fall of the ring-wing government of Constantine Karamanlis and its replacement by the Centre Union headed by George Papandreou. The influence of left-wing forces and their activity sharply mounted. In 1965 Greece witnessed as many as 1.5 million strikers. That July, some 300,000 people took part in a political strike protesting against the plot by reactionaries headed by the royal court that had toppled the Papandreou government.

In Portugal mass protests and demonstrations by workers occurred in Lisbon and other cities in 1961 and 1962. The 1962 May Day demonstrations were the biggest the Salazar fascist dictatorship had ever seen.

Important processes were taking place during the 60s in the Spanish labour movement. Despite the harsh anti-worker laws of the Franco regime that had put strikes on the same footing as "subversive activities" subject to military tribunals, the first ever strikes since the fall of the Republic had begun back in the mid-50s. That process could not be stopped either by repression or by manoeuvres by the Franco "vertical" trade unions, whose impotence and ineffectiveness became particularly apparent in the course of these events. In the late 50s and early 60s the country witnessed substantial changes objectively creating a more favourable situation for further promotion of the labour movement, its transition to a higher qualitative plane. The rise of the strike campaign in 1955 and 1956, parallel with the mounting student movement, showed the more realistically-minded members of the ruling clique that if the regime wished to survive it had to adapt itself to the new internal and external situation. A group of technocrats associated with the secular Catholic organisation Opus Dei came into the limelight in the government. This relatively liberal (by contrast with its predecessors) group undertook several measures intended to modernise the country along industrial lines.

That accelerated the country's conversion from an agrarian-industrial to an industrial-agrarian land and encouraged a rapid growth of proletariat. While back in 1940, 4.8 million people had been employed in farming and fishing, and only 4.4 million in industry and the service sphere, by 1950 the figures were respectively 5.3 million and 5.5 million, and in 1960 they were 4.7 and 6.5 million.¹

The technocrats realised that in the new circumstances it was not possible to maintain the old fascist labour legislation, inasmuch as it was not flexible enough effectively to control the burgeoning labour disputes. Therefore, they made certain concessions to the working class (in particular, they adopted a law in 1958 on collective agreements) which the workers used in the new situation objectively widening their struggle opportunities.

From the early 60s there commenced a rapid upsurge in the strike movement that reached great sweep in 1962. In the spring of that year it not only broke the record for the number of strikers (300,000) but also saw an unprecedented spread of strikes throughout Spain (in 24 of the 50 provinces, including those that had never had strikes before). Altogether that year there were 425 labour actions in which approximately 660,000 people were involved.

Even though Franco himself announced that there would be no

¹ Amando de Miguel, *40 millones de españoles 40 años después*, Barcelona, 1976, p. 46.

talks with the strikers, the government finally had to yield. That was an exceptionally important moment in the labour movement's development. For the first time under Franco it became aware of its strength. Thenceforth, although strikes remained outside the law, they became an everyday and common event. According to obviously depressed statistics issued by the vertical unions, in 1967 there were 402 labour disputes with the participation of 272,964 workers; in 1968—respectively 236 and 111,435; in 1969—459 and 174,719; and in 1970—817 disputes with the participation of 366,146 workers.¹

The growing proletarian class struggle in Spain was accompanied by strenuous searching for a new form of class organisation corresponding to the workers' interests and the specific conditions of the Franco state. The numerous attempts to resurrect in the underground the old trade union organisations Unión General de Trabajadores and the Confederación Nacional del Trabajo (which both had had a total membership of some 4 million people in the past) ended in failure and repression. The Socialists and anarcho-syndicalists once at the head of the two organisations were in exile, while those staying in the country actually curtailed work among the working class, convinced that re-establishment of genuine trade unions could only occur after the overthrow of the Franco regime.

In the presence of that vacuum the first Workers' Commissions sprang up in the late 50s as a fundamentally new form of proletarian organisation. They arose spontaneously, in the course of struggle that swept aside any sectarianism. The new organisations swiftly demonstrated their vitality and effectiveness. They were not unduly vulnerable since their tactics resembled those of the guerrilla struggle with deep roots in the country's history. As they constantly underlined in their manifesto documents, they were neither a party nor a trade union, not having rules or collecting dues. On the one hand, that created additional potential for legal defence in the event of prosecution under the authoritarian regime, and on the other it attracted many workers to the Workers' Commissions among whom anarcho-syndicalist feelings were still strong.

Right from the start the demands of the rising labour movement were not so much economic as aimed at safeguarding the right to work, at having a social insurance system and guarantees against redundancies. That inevitably led to politicisation of the Workers' Commissions.

During the 1962-1963 class battles, the Commissions sprang up everywhere and became the main and effectively only form of proletarian class organisation at that time. Their prestige had become

¹ *Cambio-16*, January 24-30, 1977, No. 268, p. 27.

so great that employers were forced more and more to enter into negotiations with them, recognising them as the only representative organisations of workers and thereby obviating the official vertical unions. A while later, the Commission leaders began to seek forms to consolidate their organisations, to establish contacts among the Commissions within the framework of an industry, province and the whole country.

Communists acquired considerable influence with the Commissions, realising in practice the notion of combining legal and illegal forms of struggle. The Sixth Congress of the Communist Party in January 1960 proclaimed a "national reconciliation" policy which helped Communists find a way to make contacts with popular masses and establish alliances with members of all political and religious groups. Left Catholics also played a big part in the Commissions. Socialists and anarcho-syndicalists, however, were effectively outside the Commissions by virtue of the sectarian stand taken by their leaders.

The most flexible members of the upper classes, the most inclined to compromise, seeing the futility of attempts to cut short strikes by former methods, endeavoured to integrate the Commissions in the regime's system and thereby to inject fresh blood into the vertical unions. They sought to divert the workers from politics and prevent any further strengthening of left-wing positions within the Commissions. The relative toleration shown by the authorities at that time made it possible in late 1964 and early 1965 to switch to the creation of permanent Workers' Commissions throughout the country (in their initial period, the Commissions used to dissolve themselves after a conflict had been resolved).

Technical workers, engineers and white-collar employees began to join manual workers in the Workers' Commissions, seeing in them an effective means of protecting their professional interests. During the strike struggle a sense of purpose, organisation and co-ordination of action increased. Forms of struggle became more varied. The Commissions organised impressive demonstrations, protest meetings and marches that gained the growing support of wide sections of the population. They made close contact with the student movement, progressive intellectuals and leaders of left-wing parties and organisations. The Church also gave the Commissions growing support, gradually switching to opposition to the regime and trying to demonstrate solidarity with the workers and enlist their sympathy for the future.

The regime was unable to tame the Workers' Commissions. That became particularly obvious during the trade union elections of 1966 when the Commissions succeeded in getting any of their candidates into grass-roots elective bodies (in Asturias and the Basque

country they received an average of 83.3 per cent of the vote).¹ That produced greater repression. In 1967 the Commissions were outlawed. But by that time they had gained considerable authority in the country and the sympathy of the whole people. It proved impossible to do away with them. Despite the arrests, the Commissions continued to function, gaining more strength, producing new leaders and sinking deeper roots.

The labour movement played a major role in undermining the foundations of the Franco regime, becoming a force to be reckoned with in politics. It thereby paved the way for the Spanish workers to go on to an extensive offensive at the head of the democratic opposition in the 70s.

Thus, in Spain, as in Italy, France and Japan, the labour movement in the early 60s very much came to life and made an assault on the positions of the ruling class. Its increasing activity took place everywhere, although it was more limited and spasmodic in other countries.

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF THE LABOUR MOVEMENT IN VARIOUS COUNTRIES

As opposed to the preceding and subsequent periods, the late 50s and early 60s were marked by sharp disparities in the development of the labour movement in various countries caused to a large extent by their different historical conditions and traditions. In the initial post-war years these peculiarities were in some way disguised by the conditions of post-war reconstruction and the democratic upsurge associated with the defeat of fascism, common to the whole of Western Europe. At the end of the 50s and in the first half of the 60s the incipient third stage in capitalism's general crisis had not yet given the internal political situation such a clearly-expressed common denominator. Given the already marked, but still in many respects limited and incomplete upsurge in the labour movement, the concrete situation in each country and the similarities or differences between them acquired immense significance for the course of the struggle as never before.

We have already mentioned that a group of countries sprinted ahead in the sweep and level of the labour movement. Those were first and foremost Italy and France and, outside Europe, Japan. Then follow Spain and Greece, where labour movement possessed only some of the characteristics typical of that group and which were marked off to a large extent by other conditions and a different nature of the struggle. Finland is listed in the same group.

¹ Julián Ariza, *Comisiones obreras*, Barcelona, 1976, p. 20.

Britain (up to the end of the 60s), West Germany, the Scandinavian and some other countries of Western Europe, the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, despite their differences, possessed several similar features and comprised a second group. Belgium occupied an intermediate position, in so far as there were no large-scale actions following the great strike of 1960 and 1961.

The socio-economic and political conditions in countries with a highly active labour movement were by no means identical: suffice it to compare France, one of the older capitalist countries, and Japan where the capitalist system had only established itself in the latter part of the last century. But the common characteristic feature of all those countries was the *particularly acute and direct manifestation of deep-going capitalist contradictions*. That distinguishing feature appeared because of the combination (varying in different countries) of such factors as the relative (for Europe) weakness of the bourgeoisie, the narrowness of the productive and social base on which the bourgeoisie rested, the compounding of capitalism's problems with the vestiges of earlier orders (Italy, Spain and Greece), the rapid shifts in social structure owing to sharply accelerating economic development (Japan, Italy, Belgium and Spain), the long-established anti-capitalist and revolutionary traditions of the working class (Italy, Finland and, especially, France), the lasting effect of post-war democratic upsurge (Italy, France and Japan), the downfall of the old foreign policy of the ruling class (Japan and Finland), etc.

As a result, what was typical of the great bulk of those countries was the wide popularity of militant anti-capitalist moods among the working class, the active democratic and anti-fascist trends among the ordinary people as a whole, the powerful political actions of the proletariat under democratic slogans, and the great scale and organisation of the strike struggle which was a constant factor in the domestic socio-political situation. Here popular pressure was marked much more than elsewhere by its protracted, consistent and diverse nature. Most of those countries had mass Communist parties that exerted extensive or even overwhelming influence on the working class and enjoyed considerable support from non-proletarian sections of the working people. Reformist tendencies in the labour movement were normally relatively weaker than in other advanced capitalist countries, which often had its effect on the positions of Socialist parties and groups. But what stood in the way of further growth in the anti-monopoly and democratic struggle were the split in the trade union movement and the insufficient political unity of the working class.

The other group of advanced capitalist states—the USA, Britain, West Germany, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the Scandi-

navian countries—was to a much less extent affected by the anti-monopoly struggle. In many of them, particularly in the major citadel of imperialism, the USA, capitalism was able not only to dig in solidly, to accumulate immense wealth, but also to create reserves for manoeuvre, to gain ideological hegemony over considerable numbers of workers. All that, along with the lack of serious vestiges of pre-capitalist structures burdening the plight of the popular mass, helped capitalism for a time to defuse the pressure of class conflict, partially to damp down acute contradictions of bourgeois society, and made it particularly difficult for the revolutionary forces to put up a fight.

Another factor was the lack or weakness of revolutionary traditions in those countries. The traditional subtle manoeuvring of the ruling class also played its part in Britain and its former dominions. Special conditions took shape in West Germany where the brutal repression and brazen demagogy of nazism had put paid to the earlier revolutionary tradition, where the hardships of war and defeat had for a certain time produced fatigue and passivity among the people, while the influence of socialist change in the German Democratic Republic had forced the ruling class to make concessions, temporarily fortifying reformist trends in the labour movement.

Typical of those countries in the late 50s and first part of the 60s were the domination of trade unionist or social reformist views and feelings within the labour movement, and almost everywhere—much less than in Italy or Japan—low-level proletarian strike activity, predominance of economic struggle and relatively limited influence from left-wing forces. Nevertheless, capitalism was unable to escape from its contradictions even in those countries.

In most of them (save the USA) a critical attitude to capitalism had long existed strongly among the working people, even though it was marked by reformist inconsistency. By contrast, in the USA the working class was on the whole still under the influence of bourgeois ideological-political hegemony. It did not appreciate the radical opposite nature of its interests to those of capital and had no mass workers' party. And yet it did know how to fight stubbornly for its economic interests, and the everyday strike movement frequently acquired the character of fierce class struggle. The ruling circles sought to play down the sweep of that struggle. A case in point is the adoption by the US Congress in 1959 of the Landrum-Griffin Act which bolstered the intervention by government agencies in union affairs, restricted unions' freedom of action and gave employers substantial opportunities for disrupting strikes.

In the late 50s and first part of the 60s these countries witnessed a certain rise in the strike struggle. True, while Canada from

1958 had had a virtually constant rise in the strike movement, most of the others in the group experienced an upsurge only spasmodically: an expansion of strikers' ranks in the USA in 1959 and 1964-1965, actions in Britain in early 1962 when some 1.5 million people took part in two one-day strikes of engineering workers against a wage freeze, a short resurgence of West German working-class strike activity after a long lull (in 1962 the country had 79,000 strikers and lost 451,000 strike man-days, in 1963 it had 316,000 strikers, almost exclusively engineering workers, and lost 1,846,000 man-days).¹ Brief explosions of the strike movement occurred in the Scandinavian countries, but the level of the strike struggle here was much lower than in the USA or Britain. What told here was both the long-standing rule of social democratic governments, the introduction back in the 20s of strict regulation of the strike movement and the highly centralised structure of unions which hampered local initiative and transferred all conduct of collective negotiations to the national centre.

Together with occasional intensification of the strike struggle in some of the above-mentioned countries there were latent processes whose importance for the labour movement was evident later, towards the end of the decade or even in the early 70s. As one example, the leftward drift of the unions, in some countries going back to the late 50s, was to become a major factor in the rise of the labour movement.

Of particular significance was the shift to the left of the British trade unions. It had its effect, in particular, in the growing trade union activity in defence of peace. Representatives of many trade unions took part in organising actions and conference of peace supporters. That was reflected in the official stance of several unions. In the summer of 1959 conferences of the General and Municipal Workers' Union, the electricians, chemical workers and several others, often in the face of opposition from their leaders, adopted resolutions demanding that a future Labour government should take unilateral action to halt the manufacture of nuclear weapons and ban the use of any such weapon from British territory. Union conferences in the summer of 1960 took place at a time of stubborn campaigning against right-wing forces and reaffirmed the predominance of nuclear opponents within the trade union movement.

It was the position of the biggest trade unions that led in 1960 to victory for the left on the two major issues at the Labour Party Conference in Scarborough. The Conference rejected on a majority vote the prepared statement by the right-wing leadership that had

¹ *Yearbook of Labour Statistics 1964*, p. 557.

expressed support for British foreign policy oriented on NATO and alliance with the USA. The conference passed a resolution calling for renunciation of the manufacture of nuclear weapons and the removal of American nuclear bases from British soil. It further resolutely rejected an attempt by Gaitskell to revise the Party's socialist goals (to exclude from the Programme Clause 4 on the need for public ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange).

The start of the 60s was marked by the unions' dogged struggle against the Conservative government's declared policy to hold back wage rises. The government failed to convince the unions to introduce voluntary wage restrictions within the bounds of the incomes policy. And the Conservatives ran into more and even stronger opposition from the unions over the question of British entry to the Common Market. Although ideological-political demagoguery of reformism (in its Labour variant) within the British labour movement continued, the leftward shift of many trade unions and the strengthening of their opposition to attempts by the bourgeois state to instigate a wage freeze foreshadowed acute class clashes that were to break out later.

Shop-stewards elected by workers directly on the shop floor and in factories, docks and building sites played no small role in promoting a militant spirit within the British trade union movement. In spite of the repression (the shop-stewards were often among the first workers to be sacked from their jobs) and attempts to tame the shop-stewards, the shop-steward movement, in which there were many Communists, continued to grow strong and expand. They stood at the head of many strikes (especially against sackings) and their activity compensated for the inert leadership of a number of unions.

The leftward shift of the union movement occurred in other countries as well. The left wing of the West German unions, relying on the biggest and most influential organisations, the engineering (some 2 million members), communal service, transport, and communications (about a million) and chemical workers (over half a million), rejected the idea of capitalism's transformation and integration of the working class into the "system". The left sharply criticised authoritarian tendencies and, pointing up the neofascist danger, tried to turn the union movement into the main bastion of resistance to reaction and militarism. In insisting upon the class positions of the unions, the left wing more than once came into open conflict both with the right wing of the union leadership and with the Social Democratic Party. The Düsseldorf manifesto of the Association of German Trade Unions (DGB) adopted in 1963 reflected some of the left wing's ideas. But the move to the

left of West German unions was inconsistent and limited. Even the left wing of the unions remained anti-communist and went no further than reformism in its demands.

All the same, by contrast with the beginning of the 20th century, when trade unions, the stronghold of narrow trade unionist and conciliatory policy, were usually on the right of the social democratic movement, in the 60s they were more left than the respective Social Democratic parties in many countries of the northern and north-western part of Europe. In circumstances where these latter, having declared themselves to be "national" parties, refused to act as representatives of the working class, reorientating themselves on winning over middle strata, defence of workers' interests was largely made by the trade unions. That phenomenon was all the more important in view of the general growth in importance of trade unions in capitalist states. The leftward shift of the British unions in view of their close connection with the Labour Party opened up, moreover, the prospect of fighting for a change in the policy of the Labour leadership.

In Scandinavian countries and also in Belgium and the Netherlands, the first, though still hardly noticeable, signs of the Social Democrats having reached the pinnacle of their electoral success signalled less room for them to manoeuvre. It is, therefore, not surprising that left-wing Socialist parties should appear in Norway, Denmark and the Netherlands. A left Socialist opposition (Socialist Alliance, Union of Independent Socialists, Socialist Student Union), consisting in the main of proponents of socialist ideas expelled from the Social Democratic Party of Germany after its open shift to the right, formed in West Germany. It launched an energetic propaganda campaign, particularly among the young.

In Canada where the late 50s and the first part of the 60s were marked by political instability and rising anti-American feeling, the labour movement made the first steps to gaining political independence: under strong pressure from below in 1961 trade union leaders set up the New Democratic Party (NDP). Its programme included a number of demands on behalf of the workers in the social sphere and was based on the reformist notion of "democratic socialism".

In Australia the movement in defence of aborigines, pioneered by Communists, achieved considerable scope. And Communists strengthened their position within the trade union movement.

All that went to show that the factors marking the beginning of the third stage of capitalism's general crisis were operating in all capitalist countries. Yet that did not change the fact that the overall situation in the labour movement of the late 50s and first part of the 60s in Britain, West Germany, the Scandinavian countries,

the USA, Canada and Australia was still far from the stormy upsurge and active struggle that existed in the first group of countries (Italy, France and Japan). Geographical disparities in the development of the labour movement, the lagging behind of several of its sections under the influence of reformist ideology combined to make international solidarity and co-ordination of working-class actions in the various countries a more complicated matter.

Disparities in labour movement development were also apparent in the content and direction of struggle. Its distinguishing feature most frequently became either most wide-scale political demands (defence of democracy, securing of peace, putting an end to foreign policy dependence) or, on the contrary, the most specific, most often economic demands of the working class. The fight for social and economic change connecting those two orientations received far less development.

Many of the working class' large-scale demonstrations in the early 60s were against extreme right-wing reactionary political forces, in defence of or to gain democratic rights and institutions (Italy, France, Spain, Portugal and Greece) or, more rarely, to gain substantial changes in foreign policy (France—ending the war in Algeria; Britain and West Germany—renunciation of atomic weapons; Japan—halting dependence on the USA, annulling the Japanese-American Security Treaty).

Working-class intervention had immense importance for strengthening new trends within the international policy of bourgeois states. For example, the struggle by the French workers, particularly the February 1962 actions, played a paramount part in putting an end to the colonial war in Algeria. The electorate's mood, primarily that of the workers, undoubtedly influenced French ruling circles in adopting realistic decisions to withdraw from the NATO military organisation and to establish friendly relations with the USSR and other socialist countries.

Events in France are far from the only example of working-class impact on the government's foreign policy decisions. In Finland, consolidation of the Paasikivi-Kekkonen policy of peace-loving and good-neighbourly relations with the Soviet Union cannot be understood without taking account of the dogged struggle in support of that policy conducted by Finnish Communists relying on wide sections of the working class. The fact that after long and patient work Communists were able to gain co-operation with the Social Democrats, establishing a link between the latter and other progressive forces on questions of foreign policy, considerably fortified the social basis of the Paasikivi-Kekkonen line and helped to shore up the changes that were taking place in Finnish foreign policy.

The widespread campaign in the late 50s and early 60s against

the threat of nuclear war (the Aldermaston marches, the peace marches in Italy, West Germany and elsewhere, demonstrations against the entry of submarines equipped with nuclear missiles into Japanese ports, etc.) facilitated a social mood in which international agreements on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapon, the partial nuclear test ban and subsequent treaties on strategic arms limitation were made possible.

A new stage in the anti-war struggle of the working class began with US aggression in Vietnam. From the mid-60s the movement of solidarity with Vietnam in many countries became an important factor in mobilising fresh contingents of workers, democratic youth and progressive intellectuals for the struggle. Sweden was one capitalist country where earlier than elsewhere large segments of the population had become involved in the protest movement against the US aggression. What mattered here was the democratic tradition, inherent in the progressive sections of the Swedish people, of international solidarity in the fight against fascism and war, as well as the long-standing pacifist tradition. A Vietnam solidarity movement came into being in the mid-60s in other West European countries.

Popular participation in the peace campaign was, however, uneven and often confined to sporadic campaigns at times when international tension was on the rise.

The direction in which most efforts by the labour movement were directed was to safeguard people's everyday economic interests. Nonetheless, that economic struggle was now of a different character. While in the circumstances of post-war economic difficulties it was a matter of fighting to satisfy the workers' most elementary material needs to secure employment and a reasonable standard of living, the acceleration of economic development in the late 50s and early 60s created more favourable conditions for the struggle by the working class to improve its situation. The buoyant state of the market forced employers to be particularly afraid of losses from strikes, obliged them to be more yielding. Essentially in the new circumstances it was now a matter of the workers trying to prevent the monopolies from appropriating all the fruits of economic prosperity. The gains already achieved often became a springboard for further advance.

Strikes remained the principal form of economic struggle. The USA was in first place in average annual number of strikes, but in terms of participants Italy and France headed the list. Japan and Belgium also stood out as countries with a high rate of strike activity.

Questions of wages throughout the period were at the centre of the strike struggle (particularly where the wage level was lower).

Being forced to yield to a certain rise in wages and living standards, capitalism did what it could, however, to make that dependent on the rate of growth of productivity. Incomes policy, therefore, became a salient element of the state-monopoly policy in many countries.

Attempts to reduce the trade unions to appendages of the state-monopoly system ran into opposition. In the Netherlands, where such attempts had been made back in the 50s, the government's incomes policy suffered defeat. In Italy the pretensions of ruling circles in 1963 and 1964 to move in that direction ran up against both resolute resistance from the Italian General Confederation of Labour and serious objections from the Catholic unions. In the United States workers in many industries gained wage rises that surpassed the limit of 3.2 per cent a year set by the Kennedy Administration. In France, Japan and other countries workers went on strike and in many cases extracted a more substantial rise in wages than the government had intended. In Britain, after the coming to power of the Labour government in 1964, an accord was reached with trade unions on an incomes policy, but in practice workers showed no particular wish to have anything to do with it.

Apart from direct struggle against state-monopoly incomes policy, workers used other means. There was a marked increase in demands to shorten the working week (which brought in its wake an increase in overtime payments), and increases in various fringe benefits and employers' contributions to various forms of social insurance. Such tactics were linked up with both increasing resistance by the state to direct wage rises and with the need to avoid an automatic rise in taxation of higher wages, since the welfare benefits were tax-free.

But the economic demands of the working class in the late 50s and early 60s certainly did not end with questions of raising wages. The movement to bridge the gap between the rapid economic growth and extremely slow social progress frequently took another form as well: that was the fight against the most glaring manifestations of those disasters caused by economic development under capitalism, by modernisation and rationalisation of production through state-monopoly measures. Migration leading to arduous social consequences (Italy), the emergence of a whole series of impoverished regions (Italy, Belgium, Britain and the USA), mass structural unemployment against the general growth of production (the USA, Italy and Belgium)—all provoked vigorous action by the working class. One heroic example of that struggle was the strike of 15,000 miners at the Miike coal mines in Japan in 1960, called to protest at the sack-ing of 1,200 workers and continuing for almost 9 months with the backing of the whole proletariat. Big strikes in support of the right

to work became an important factor that forced governments on several occasions to draw up special national programmes for maintaining employment.

The speed-up at capitalist enterprises, particularly where there were piece rates and kindred forms of wages, forced the industrial workers in many countries to fight to be transferred to time rates, most frequently monthly payment. That was the direction of workers' demands to bridge the gap in conditions of payment and status which existed between them and white-collar workers. That demand began to resound more often in the proletariat's strike actions. At the same time, strikers achieved further levelling up of their socio-economic terms of employment with those which had previously been the privilege of white-collar workers. In a situation of capitalist rationalisation, when it was becoming increasingly difficult to keep older workers in employment, the demand for a lowering of the pensionable age was becoming popular. Insisting on not only an agreed but a legislative consolidation of many of these gains, the strikers were trying to make them irrevocable. That economic struggle was already acquiring a political significance.

Another means of politicising the economic struggle was the increasingly energetic advancement of the question of trade union rights in a whole number of countries (Italy, France, Belgium, Britain, the USA and Sweden). Reconstruction of the production apparatus giving employers more opportunity for arbitrary action and the further increase in state meddling in the economy (right up to incomes policy and state arbitration of labour disputes) brought up the issue of trade union control over organisation and conditions of work and the overall orientation of technological and structural changes in the economy. In practice, that was more commonly expressed, on the one hand, in the fight for local union branches or production committees to have a hand in resolving issues associated with the organisation, conditions and payment of work (hiring and sacking, wage rates, conveyor speed, bonuses, the skill rating system, number of workers at a machine, etc.) and with all the changes in those areas and, on the other hand, in the still not very specific demands for union participation in tackling all the paramount socio-economic problems affecting the working class on a nationwide basis (planning, pricing policy, social insurance, health service, and so on).

Thus, the working-class' struggle for everyday vital interests precipitated demands for socio-economic reforms to curb the power of the monopolies, for deep-going democratic change and for an alternative anti-monopoly policy. It was the movement for such socio-economic change that could unite the workers' economic and political actions into a single stream, could become a decisive link in

the anti-monopoly struggle. However, that direction of the labour movement was least developed in the late 50s and early 60s.

During the great strike of 1960-1961 in Belgium, its participants put forward the demand for structural reforms (for the first time advanced by Belgian unions even earlier). But it was too general and indefinite and was unable to become an effective alternative to the policies of the monopolies and the bourgeois state. In Italy the Communist Party at its 8th and 9th congresses in 1956 and 1960 drew up an extensive programme of democratic structural reforms. But the novelty of those demands for the ordinary people and the complexity of the political situation had not yet made it possible in the first part of the 60s to launch a really mass movement on the basis of that programme.

The slogan of structural reform, of far-reaching socio-political transformation, gained popularity also in some other countries. In Japan in this period it became the official slogan of the Socialist Party. Members of the left wing of the trade union movement in West Germany were talking of the need for serious social reforms. But in labour organisations, that remained under the influence of social-reformist ideology, the matter was normally limited either to advancing vague general slogans or making insubstantial leftward adjustments in the state-monopoly policy; the initiative in that issue lay with the ruling class.

It was only the communist movement that worked consistently on the issue of anti-monopoly reform in the late 50s and early 60s. The limited influence of Communist parties in a number of countries put barriers in the way of popularising those ideas among the people. But the power and authority of the international communist movement, the immense attention it paid to specific national conditions, its efforts to consolidate the ranks of workers and strengthen international solidarity, all enhanced its impact on the class struggle in the capitalist world and determined the immense importance of the theoretical and practical work of communists for the further development of that struggle.

Chapter 9

DEVELOPMENT OF WORKING-CLASS SOCIO-ECONOMIC STRUGGLE IN THE LATE 1960s AND THE 1970s

UPSURGE AND NEW FEATURES OF THE MASS STRIKE MOVEMENT

Since the mid-60s an almost continual rising strike struggle had been underway in the advanced capitalist countries; at the end of the 60s and during the 70s it reached an unprecedentedly high level. In the early part of the 70s the total number of strikes and strikers was 1.8 times that in the first part of the 60s, while days lost to strikes were double the earlier figure. Upsurge in the strike movement took place in all the major regions of the capitalist world. In the latter part of the 70s the aggregate total of strike participants in those countries on an average annual calculation surpassed 20 million for the first time in the post-war period (see Table 6). It should be noted that in a statistical analysis of development of the strike struggle official data have been used which tend to depress its overall scale, insofar as they mainly take account only of "non-political" strikes. All the same, the data do enable us clearly to see the trends and peculiarities of the strike dynamic. Fuller unofficial figures provide only a very general picture and not infrequently are in the nature of estimations.

Many strike actions of the period have no precedent in the history of the labour movement in the countries concerned. For example, the general strike in May, April and June 1968 in France exceeded the most powerful strike movements of the past in terms of participants, duration and level of popular militancy. The 20 million-strong strikes that involved virtually all the employed population took place in Italy for the first time in 1969 and were then repeated in 1973-1974. In Japan no strike in the country's history was equal to that which marked the culminating point of the 1974 "spring offensive" when some 8 million blue- and white-collar employees simultaneously took part in the struggle. In 1976, in Canada and Australia there were the first general strikes. The strike struggle reached the zenith of its intensity in the mid-70s in Denmark and Greece. In Britain strike activity in 1972, 1974 and particularly in 1979, marking a

Table 6

General Indicators of the Strike Movement¹
a = number of strikes; b = number of strikers (thous.)
c = number of days lost in strikes (thous.)

		1951-1955	1956-1960	1961-1965	1966-1970	1971-1975	1976	1977	1978	1976-1978	1979
USA and Canada	a	4,745	3,892	3,942	5,647	6,157	6,687	6,309	5,288	6,094	5,830
	b	2,548	1,798	1,468	2,976	2,828	3,991	2,258	2,025	2,758	2,183
	c	33,911	34,097	28,840	50,879	43,686	49,470	39,130	44,315	44,305	43,301
Western Europe ²	a	6,011	6,765	8,522	9,400 ³	14,362	16,669	12,832	11,275	13,592	9,360 ⁴
	b	4,364	4,302	7,079	10,050 ³	12,201	18,095	20,804	15,232	18,044	27,205 ⁴
	c	13,864	16,308	21,171	58,200 ³	43,992	50,099	51,100	39,614	46,938	82,953
Japan	a	717	865	1,311	1,611	3,511	2,720	1,712	1,517	1,983	1,153
	b	1,218	1,214	1,422	1,232	2,406	1,356	692	660	903	450
	c	6,534	5,440	4,432	2,992	6,692	3,254	1,518	1,358	2,043	930
Australia and New Zealand	a	1,562	1,139	1,261	1,992	2,852	2,542	2,652	2,688	2,627	2,042 ⁵
	b	468	393	443	901	1,411	2,391	755	1,234	1,460	1,863 ⁵
	c	1,255	683	740	1,531	3,697	4,287	2,085	2,512	2,961	3,964 ⁵
Total	a	13,035	12,661	15,051	18,650	26,882	28,618	23,505	20,768	24,296	18,385 ^{4,5}
	b	9,108	7,707	10,309	15,159	18,846	25,833	24,509	19,151	23,165	36,701 ^{4,5}
	c	55,564	56,523	47,506	113,602	98,067	107,110	93,833	87,799	96,247	131,148 ⁵

¹ Average annual figures on the basis of official statistics.

² Austria, Britain, Belgium, Denmark, Ireland, Spain, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Finland, France, West Germany and Sweden.

³ Including a general political strike of almost 10 million workers in France from May to June 1968.

⁴ Not including France.

⁵ Not including New Zealand.

Sources: *International Labour Movement*, Moscow, 1972, pp. 154-56 (in Russian); *Yearbook of Labour Statistics 1980; Main Economic Indicators*, Paris, June 1980.

record in terms of strikers and days lost to strikes, forced the mass media to draw a parallel with 1926—the year of the memorable general strike. The first general strike in 40 years took place in Spain in 1976. And in West Germany during the 70s (particularly in 1971 and 1978) the strike struggle markedly grew by contrast with the preceding decade. The US Labour Department recorded the largest number of strikes in 1974—6,074—in the country's history. The bourgeois press had complained back in 1970 about "the worst epidemic of strikes since just after World War II".¹

Not only the figures on numbers of strikes and strikers give an idea of the mass nature as the main feature of the strike struggle in the 70s. It is evident in the shift from local to industrial and national strikes,² the more or less long-lasting campaigns ("days" and "weeks" of action, "spring offensives"). There was a mounting scale of the strike struggle. In taking part in a general industrial and especially a national strike, a worker felt himself or herself part of a much greater whole than in the case of a strike within the confines of a workshop or a factory.

It is noteworthy that the mounting strike wave in the late 60s and early 70s took place in a situation of relatively normal capitalist development; it was due to gradually accumulating contradictions in capitalist production, aggravated and reinforced by scientific and technological progress under state-monopoly capitalism.

The 1974-1975 economic crisis did not affect the basic indicators of the strike struggle or lead to its downturn by contrast with the past. This new phenomenon, of course, did not mean that the worsening economic situation had ceased to influence the frequency and scope of strikes. Specific historical factors causing greater or lesser strike activity by workers are numerous and varied. But the economic situation is one of the most important. Long observations indicate that between its cyclical changes and the dynamic of the strike struggle there really is a definite, though by no means automatic connection. Changes in the mechanism of that connection are precisely what constitutes new elements which came to the fore in the rising strike movement of the late 60s and early 70s.

The 1974-1975 economic crisis and subsequent low economic activity were accompanied only in a few countries by a clear-cut fall in strike activity. That applied above all to Japan where a change in economic circumstances of working-class struggle coincided with

¹ *Time*, November 9, 1970, p. 75.

² In 1974 alone the 6 leading capitalist countries had 20 general strikes in which 90 million people took part.

mounting difficulties in the labour and trade union movement. Low economic activity left its imprint at certain times in the latter part of the 70s on the dynamic of the strike struggle in some other countries. As a result, the overall indicators (see Table 7) in the period 1977-1978 were lower than in 1976. In those years too, however, the level of strike activity was much higher than in the 50s and the first part of the 60s, while a new powerful upsurge in the strike wave occurred in 1979.

Table 7

**Average Annual Number of Strikes (A),
Their Participants (B) and Days Lost to Strikes (C)
in the Major Capitalist Countries**

Periods	A	B(thous.)	C(thous.)	Periods	A	B(thous.)	C(thous.)
USA				Italy			
1944-1958	4,278	2,490	37,000	1949-1958	1,610	2,235	6,214
1959-1968	3,905	1,749	30,200	1959-1968	3,115	2,809	11,134
1969-1979	5,291	2,303	39,556	1969-1978	3,759	8,937	22,066
Britain				West Germany			
1944-1958	2,044	622	2,810	1949-1958	—	146	1,005
1958-1968	2,344	1,255	3,397	1959-1968	—	75	297
1969-1979	2,642	1,608	12,290	1969-1979	—	188	1,082
France				Japan			
1946-1958	1,880	2,133	6,212	1946-1958	655	1,150	5,927
1959-1967 ¹	1,842	2,076	2,634	1959-1968	1,252	1,228	4,150
1969-1978	3,479	1,877	3,415	1969-1978	2,609	1,665	4,370

¹ No official figures for 1968.

Source: *Yearbook of Labour Statistics* for several years.

So, despite the extremely unpropitious economic situation of the middle and latter part of the 70s, the strike movement generally maintained its wide sweep.

There were several reasons for that. One was that with new requirements engendered by scientific and technological progress, even in a crisis situation there was a shortage of certain types of labour power. The growing strength and organisation of the working class was of even greater importance. What is more, the ruling circles often aspired to mollify the consequences of unemployment for the workers, fearing an aggravation of the social situation in their countries. As a result, the opportunities for a capitalist to use the pressure of the mass of unemployed beyond the factory gates as a

means of cooling down the militant passions of his own employees were contracting.

The dynamic of wages was also affecting the strike movement in a new way. During previous crises prices had fallen and capitalists reduced wages. The outbreak of strikes had been largely at two points of the economic cycle: entry into the crisis (when there was a more or less sharp wage drop) and exit out of depression (when the pick up told workers that demands for wage supplements once again had real chances of success). Between those points lay a fairly lengthy period of relatively depressed strike activity. During the 70s, with the conversion of inflation into a constant factor, the momentum of the strike struggle in the form of falling wage purchasing power was becoming a constant at all phases of the cycle.

Acting together, these two factors in no small measure caused the high level of strike activity even in the situation of crisis and unemployment. The general consolidation of the position of the working class in its confrontation with capital was thus reflected in very practical matters. The working class in many instances managed to repel the opponent's assault in areas traditional for a time of crisis.

In the advanced capitalist countries the end of the 60s and the duration of the 70s were marked by a singular growth in all three major figures for strike activity: the number of strikes, days lost to strikes and strike participants. But not one of them provides a full and genuine picture. The first index, for example, frequently reflects far from all strikes that have taken place, and does not distinguish between a strike at a large enterprise and one at a factory with only a few dozen workers. The number of days lost to strikes may change independently of expansion or contraction of the battlefield: for example, it increases when employers for whatever reason are able to refuse to meet strikers' demands for a longer period and more stubbornly, while they themselves have the power and potential for a protracted confrontation. The statistically-fixed number of strike participants, too, does not always accurately reflect the dynamic of a change in the mass nature of the struggle.

There is sense, therefore, in supplementing the figures shown in Table 7 with calculations characterising the degree of involvement of hired workers in the struggle (see Table 8) and its persistence (see Table 9).¹ A comparison of those figures with those in Table 8 confirmed the trend to a marked growth in militant activity of workers from the late 60s after its slight decline in the period following the upsurge of the initial post-war years.

¹ Tables 7-9 embrace only six major capitalist powers, but their share of all strikes in the capitalist world was about 70 per cent.

Table 8

**Average Annual Number of Strikers per 10,000
Hired Workers in the Major Capitalist States**

USA		West Germany	
1944-1958	—512	1949-1958	—92
1959-1968	—288	1959-1968	—39
1869-1979	—279	1969-1979	—83
Britain		Japan	
1946-1958	—298	1946-1958	—783
1959-1968	—536	1959-1968	—466
1969-1979	—687	1969-1978	—494 ¹
France		Italy	
1946-1958	—1,788	1949-1958	—2,075
1959-1967	—1,461	1959-1968	—2,267
1969-1970	—1,070	1969-1970	—6,160

¹ 1969-1979—458.

Source: Yearbook of Labour Statistics for several years and national statistical yearbooks and monthly bulletins for 1980.

Table 9

**Average Annual Strike Days per Striker
in the Major Capitalist States**

USA		West Germany	
1944-1958	—14.86	1949-1958	—6.88
1959-1968	—17.27	1959-1968	—3.98
1969-1979	—17.35	1969-1979	—3.87
Britain		Japan	
1944-1958	—4.52	1946-1958	—5.15
1959-1968	—2.71	1959-1968	—3.38
1969-1979	—7.99	1969-1978	—2.57
France		Italy	
1946-1958	—2.91	1949-1958	—2.78
1959-1967	—1.27	1959-1968	—3.96
1969-1978	—1.94	1969-1979	—3.03

Source: Yearbook of Labour Statistics for several years.

Table 8 illustrates the already-mentioned differentiation between the major capitalist states into two groups from the viewpoint of the breadth of workers' participation in the strike struggle: the group with a relatively high and average level of involvement (Italy, France, Japan and Britain) and the group with a relatively low level of involvement (West Germany and the USA). Table 9 shows that countries with a high level of involvement are marked by lower

expenditure of strike time per single strike participant. To some extent these figures enable us to make judgements about the effectiveness of strikes.

In comparing the duration of labour disputes in different countries we should bear in mind the style of relations between workers and employers that takes shape over many decades. That style depends on the socio-historical and political development of each particular country, the correlation of class forces within it, the nature of behaviour of the ruling class, and the level of awareness and psychological peculiarities of the proletariat. Further, the specifics of the legal system, the economic as well as political situation and other factors also have an effect on the duration of strikes and on the overall scale of the strike struggle. To a large extent the level of strike activity depends, too, on the political attitude taken by trade union leaders.

Something else has also to be taken into account. Trade unions in many countries use particular methods of strike struggle aimed at economising on their forces, and that has had some success. In such instances only part of those workers who have a stake in the conflict's outcome resort to strike action. The success of such strikes depends on the level of militancy of the whole mass of those employed: groups of factories not participating in the strike back their striking comrades materially and morally and, most importantly, by their mobilisation and demonstration of readiness to enter the struggle at any moment.

Contemporary production with its scope and complexity creates conditions also for other means of struggle. In the USA autoworkers' locals used a new form of strike in the autumn of 1972—swift strikes lasting 1-2 days at a particular factory. They require fewer sacrifices from the strikers and give the bosses a salutary shock. The press at the time noted that, for example, the halting of the production lines in Mansfield, Ohio, for 1-2 days would have disorganised production at General Motors plants throughout the country, since Mansfield makes parts for all (save two) of the firm's car makes.

In Western Europe workers also widely employed the tactics of short-term strikes during the 70s.

As well as diversification of types and forms of strike there is also enhanced importance and proportion of marginal semi-strike actions, such as slowing down the work rate, work to rules, non-cooperation with management, and refusal to do overtime. Such methods are often capable of causing disorganisation of production processes very quickly.

Resort to extra-factory methods of increasing a strike effect has also greatly grown. The famous strikes by British miners in 1972 and 1974 may be cited as eloquent examples. Miners' pickets operat-

ed at great distances, sometimes hundreds of miles from their homes, in areas where there were neither mines nor miners' unions. They picketed coal stocks, railway stations and ports, power stations, iron and steel and chemical plants using coal. The British economy began to suffocate: thermal and electricity supplies were cut to a minimum. The country, as testified to by some newspapers, was brought to its knees, even though at the end of the 1972 strike, for example, a fortnight's supply of coal remained on the stocks. Not only the length of mine inactivity, but also the breadth of solidarity with the miners, therefore, was a decisive factor in the dispute's outcome.

No less typical is the extensive use of the boycott. American workers frequently resort to that during strikes. The most famous post-war instance of the boycott in support of a strike was the 12-year (1965-1976) heroic struggle of Californian farm workers, predominantly Chicanos (migrants from Mexico) for the right to have a union. They were able to hold out largely thanks to the very extensive support from the labour movement and democratic public. It was precisely the boycott that was its dominant form. Launched all over the country and outside it, the boycott led to a sharp fall in sales of produce from enterprises caught up in the strike.

The boycott supplements other methods of strike struggle also in West European countries, particularly in Britain.

Resort to ways and means capable of securing for strikers maximum popular support and widest public sympathy is also typical of most big strikes in Italy, France, Belgium and West Germany. The holding of mass rallies became a traditional form of mobilising such support for strikers in Italy, for example, after the "hot autumn" of 1969; at times they were attended by up to 100,000-200,000 people in various cities.

The variety of ways and means of strike struggle is partly linked to the immense broadening of the social composition of its participants. Workers in the services sphere, state and municipal employees, teachers and lecturers, doctors, employees in the recreation industry all began regularly and on a mass basis to resort to what had once been a traditionally proletarian weapon of strike, along with factory workers. In 1972 and 1973 employees of state and municipal agencies in the USA held as many as 254 strikes. A similar situation existed elsewhere. Among the largest strikes in the 70s were those by 210,000 government employees in Canada in 1972, 250,000 in Britain in 1973, 500,000 in West Germany in 1974 and 300,000 in Portugal in 1978. Hundreds of thousands of office workers, teachers, medical workers and other white-collar employees in public services participated in France, Italy and Japan in national actions organised by leading trade union organisations as well as in

their own industrial strikes. Strike action by state employees in Spain and Greece sharply grew in the latter part of the 70s.

Strikes by office workers and other white collars were often not only on a large scale, but also the most dogged and acute disputes. They frequently took place in the face of legal bans and pressure from the authorities. A legal ban on strikes in the services sphere exists, in particular, in the USA, West Germany and Sweden. The fight by teachers in the USA, which flared up with particular intensity in 1972, was accompanied, for example, by hundreds of arrests, police dispersal of pickets and persecution of strikers. The many-thousand-strong strikes of doctors and hospital staff in 1974 and 1975 had no precedent in US history (the situation was particularly strained in New York, Los Angeles and Detroit), and the administration tried to win by using strike-breakers. The strike of 210,000 postal workers in Britain from January to March 1971, the first in the history of the post service, was exceptionally stubborn. No small courage and persistence were needed by the 800,000 Japanese state employees, teachers, medical workers, journalists and postal workers who held one of the most powerful strike "autumn actions" in 1974. White-collar workers organised protest strikes in Australia in 1977 against the new law that gave the authorities the option to sack state employees taking part in strikes. For the first time in post-war West German history teachers went on strike in 1979.

Even those given the job of directly safeguarding socio-political stability increasingly joined the strike struggle in this period. For example, the police began to figure more and more regularly during the 70s in the list of strikers. Police strikes occurred in the USA, West Germany, Finland, France, Italy and elsewhere. Another example were journalists, the personnel whose job it is to serve the machine of bourgeois propaganda. Instances of strikes in that group had occurred in the past, but from the 70s they acquired unprecedented scope and frequency.

Actions by mass contingents of intellectuals (teachers, doctors, engineering workers), rank-and-file office workers and personnel of the repressive agencies signalled the appearance of cracks in the very bloc of social forces serving to prop up state-monopoly capitalism.

The mass involvement in the strike struggle of rank-and-file office workers and intellectuals marks important changes in their consciousness. Already the resolve itself to defend their interests by means of collective rather than individual protest using the strike weapon signifies that these once privileged categories are starting to identify themselves with exploited hired labour. The practical experience of the strike struggle with its typical manifestations—picketing, distributing leaflets, street demonstrations, clashes with scabs and the

forces of law and order—accelerates and facilitates that process.

At the same time, participation in the strike struggle, even against one and the same adversary, by itself does not lead automatically to these groups joining the organised working class. Moreover, they not infrequently see the proletarian strike weapon as a means of fighting against their own proletarianisation, for re-establishing their erstwhile privileges. Several of such strikes bear the imprint of corporative limitation, caste narrowness. Such examples include the general strike by top civil servants in Sweden in 1972 or the strikes by Italian customs officers endeavouring to re-establish the old corporative privileges.¹

Attempts to find the adversary's Achilles' heel are part and parcel of any strike no matter what its industrial or social affiliation. But in the strikes by workers in the services sphere the very concept "adversary" takes on a different meaning than in strikes by industrial workers. Thus, while a strike in the manufacturing or extractive industries is a blow directly to the profits, authority and competitive capacity of the employers, the burden of a strike in transport or public services falls mainly on groups in the population who by no means are all capitalists.

In those circumstances the objective grounds for strikers' demands, on the one hand, and the attitude of other sections of the labour movement and the public as a whole, on the other, play a major role. The success or failure of the strike often depends on whether they think strike demands in the services sphere just or selfish, on whether they perceive the corresponding hardships and inconveniences they have to bear as an inevitable evil or as the result of arbitrary action. Those very ingredients derermine to an even greater degree the overall socio-political importance of such strikes.

For example, the mass strikes by British teachers in 1970 took place with the obvious approbation of the wide public which understood the onerous material situation of teachers. As a consequence, the teachers not only gained substantial additions to their wages, but also acquired completely new social experience, and came closer to the labour movement. Soon after the success of the strikes the National Union of Teachers joined the TUC. The workers of Italy supported demands by the police force for the right to be members of a union by a mass solidarity strike in 1977. At the same time in several capitalist countries there were in the 60s and 70s strikes by doctors, in many cases highly-paid people, and these were regarded by the public as an assault by a privileged elite on the vital interests of ordinary people.

¹ *L'Unita*, March 29, 1973.

The organised working class plays a key role in surmounting contradictions and weaknesses in the strike movement by workers in the services sphere. By safeguarding the right to strike from attacks by the ruling groups, the working class cannot allow it to be used to the detriment of the working people.

As Luciano Lama, General Secretary of the General Italian Confederation of Labour, once wrote in a *Unità* leader, "The position of the union on that issue must be, in our view, exceptionally firm: there must be no regulation on the right to strike (since such regulation would be reduced only to limitation). But we must be able to prevent the view spreading in the country that there is no defence against strikes that are objectively anti-social, insofar as here the idea of restricting trade union right could win over wide sections of the public and ultimately prevail."¹

Many trade unions and the Communist Party in Sweden expressed disagreement with the "strike of the privileged" (as the strike by top civil servants in 1971 was termed), but made no bones about the fact that they opposed the use of coercive means to halt the strike.² The French working class has invariably come to the aid of striking teachers, journalists, administrative and technical employees, scientific workers (even when left-wing parties and the unions have voiced certain reservations about the struggle's objectives and forms). For many years Japanese workers have regarded as a major demand in the "spring offensive" campaigns the return of the right to strike to civil servants. American teachers have more than once been successful in their stern strike tussles with the authorities only thanks to the threat by labour unions to call a general strike (as happened, for example, in Philadelphia in 1973 and Washington in 1974).³

Experience of factory workers teaches all sections of hired labour responsibility and careful consideration in selecting the forms, means and ploys of struggle. It inspires them to foresee the emergence of contradictions between direct and long-range effects of a strike, between the interests of one group of strikers and the ordinary people as a whole. That experience shows that the most reliable policy is that linked with the maximum development of ways and means that enable the strikers to attract and mobilise behind them the widest sections of the public. In a word, that experience teaches all sections of the working people the need to use the strike for forming the widest possible alliance of working people, and not against those interests. In many strike battles of the 70s the speci-

¹ *L'Unità*, August 31, 1975, p. 1.

² *Ny dag*, March 5-9, 1971 and March 12-16, 1971; *The Guardian*, March 11, 1971.

³ *Labor Today*, Chicago, Vol. 13, No. 6, June 1974.

fic contours of such an alliance were already etched, presenting a bold front against the common enemy—state-monopoly capitalism.

Workers began widely to use the strike to avert the danger of unemployment. More often than not these are strikes at individual enterprises called in response to sackings or to the threat of redundancies. They are particularly typical of Western Europe. When they learned of plans by Volkswagen directors to cut down on personnel, blue- and white-collar workers in the company launched a series of warning strikes in the summer of 1975. The decision by the Italian monopoly FIAT temporarily to lay off 73,000 workers produced a similar response in the winter of 1974: together with the car workers the whole of Turin came out on strike, forcing the administration to back down.¹ In the crisis such strikes became more frequent in practically all capitalist countries, including the USA where the resistance of union leaders usually makes it difficult to hold such strikes. There were many strikes against sackings at small and medium firms in Japan in the winter of 1975-1976. West German metal workers, American printers, Italian shipbuilders and Belgian iron and steel workers all defended the right to work in tough strike battles in 1978 and 1979. One of the principal motives of the powerful strike action by British steel workers in early 1980 was opposition to plans by the British Steel Corporation to undertake mass redundancies.

That type of strikes marks a new level of class awareness and militancy on the part of the workers: neither during the Great Depression of the 30s, nor at times of post-war downturns and declines in employment have redundancies created such vigorous and swift reaction. The right to work concept has taken hold in the minds of the mass of workers. At the same time strikes alone against redundancies are not capable of averting either growing unemployment generally or a cut-back in employment at many of those firms where they have been held successfully. The militant popular endeavour has turned to seeking additional means of exerting an impact on the class foe.

One such means is occupation of the factory. The first examples of a strike involving seizure of the enterprise in Western Europe date back to the 20s. Individual strikes of that nature also occurred after the war. But it was in the early 70s that the working class began to resort to that form of struggle on a mass basis. The authorities here normally lose both control over production and the right to enter the territory of the firm, to have access to the machinery and store supplies. That latter circumstance prevents any dismantling of equipment and is more often regarded by workers as a good reason for resorting to that radical form of struggle.

¹ *Rassegna sindacale*, Quaderni, No. 31, 1974, p. 222.

Objective conditions are emerging for further development of that form of struggle, for work-in strikes in which employees continue working and do so against the wishes of the boss. A work-in is essentially not a form of strike—i.e. collective termination of work for the purpose of satisfying particular demands. But since work-in strikes often grow out of termination of work with seizure of the firm (and sometimes, on the contrary, they grow into it) and are closely bound up with the strike struggle of workers, they are considered here. The securing of the normal operation of a productive unit, especially when it is a matter of a large modern concern, requires in turn one more inroad into the preserve of employers' prerogatives: taking possession of the account books, of economic finance information on the state of the firm's affairs.

One of the first and justly most celebrated example of that development of the struggle against redundancies was the 14 month-long work-in at Upper Clyde Shipbuilders (UCS) in Scotland from August 1971 to September 1972. It was called in response to the owners' decision to wind up work on the grounds of its lack of profitability, to sack 6,000 workers and deprive further thousands of people at ancillary enterprises of work. The shop-stewards committee, in which Communists were prominent, took over the running of the occupied enterprise. And ships on the building slips continued to be constructed as well as hulks made for new vessels. The work went not simply as normal, but even more successfully: there was quite a substantial increase in productivity. Through their organisation, discipline and courage the shipbuilders showed beyond all doubt that the docks were perfectly viable. They exposed the objective irrationality of capitalist management.

The extensive social effect of the struggle became possible primarily because its participants acted as fighters not merely for their own livelihoods, but for the vital interests of the British nation (Scotland above all). In turn, the atmosphere of solidarity, the national (and international) response, and the material and moral support were probably the most important conditions that enabled the strikers to hang on until final victory.

From early 1973 public attention in France centred on the Lip watch firm in Besançon. Events there were reminiscent of the UCS story—the firm's intention to half production and sack the work force, occupation of the factory by decision of a committee of delegates, and restarting production by strike participants—but with certain differences. A Swiss, effectively multinational company, was behind the decision to close down production of watches; opposition to the decision, therefore, was decidedly a patriotic act in defence of the welfare and prestige of France. The Lip workers' struggle acquired wide socio-political importance and became a symbol of

struggle between the organised working class (for a long time unions taking clear-cut class position had set the tone at the factory, and Communists enjoyed considerable influence) and the employers in cahoots with the government. That determined the acuteness of the struggle and the drama of its development.

A system of management and co-ordination was set up to continue production; it consisted of numerous workers' committees on various issues—output of parts, watch assembly, repair of equipment, calculation of wages, guarding the buildings, communication with the outside world, etc.—and of an action committee elected by a general meeting. The system functioned successfully. Groups of trade union activists visited the factory from all over the country to express solidarity and to study the organisational details of the unusual action.

As during the strike on the Clyde, a union-established solidarity fund served as the material support initially. When the government blocked bank accounts into which the collected funds flowed, the workers organised sales of the watches and used part of the income to cover production expenses. The first watch put on the market was bought by the Mayor of Besançon.

One August night in 1973 the authorities secretly despatched to Besançon a large force of gendarmes (as many as 3,000 and the mutinous factory was seized in a sudden attack. But it was not possible to suppress the workers' action, in particular, because the strikers had made a timely evacuation of the contents of the stores and safes. Only in January 1974, after more than 9 months of the fight, was it possible to draw up a solution satisfactory to the workers, and the Lip occupation came to an end.

More than 250 occupations of factories by strikers occurred in France between January and November 1975. In at least 50 cases the battle lasted for several months. In March 1978 alone strikers occupied some 200 factories and mills.

In Britain workers speedily followed the UCS example in more than a hundred factories, including such a large and modern firm as the Plessey electronics and engineering company in Scotland.

In Italy from the late 60s dozens of factories were taken over by strikers almost constantly. More than 800 enterprises shut down by employers were seized by Italian workers in 1976. Although no one has made any estimates, cases of occupation in Japan ran into large figures; if one is to judge only by those that hit the headlines we are talking of dozens of such strikes which normally lasted many months. Strikes with the taking over of factories also occurred frequently in those years in Belgium, West Germany, Denmark, Finland, Switzerland and elsewhere.

The occupation strike is a blatant assault on the right to private

ownership. In the course of such strikes it becomes palpably obvious that no one needs a capitalist boss. The essence of perception of that fact by workers was caught perfectly by the slogan that hung on the main building of the Lip factory: C'est possible. On fabrique. On vend. On se paie! (It's possible. We make. We sell. We pay ourselves).¹ It is hardly surprising that strikes of that nature often end in the factories changing from private to state or co-operative hands. Such strikes thereby make a considerable contribution to the struggle to democratise the economy and social order.

All the same, the work-ins did not attain—and could not possibly have attained—the set goal: to avert redundancies, especially at a time of crisis. Therefore, the labour movement tried through tested means of strike struggle and collective bargaining practice to find more effective means of resolving the employment problem.

The USA witnessed, for example, the extensive development of strikes with demands of lower pensionable age and the right to premature retirement with pension, a cut in work-time and, in particular, less overtime, a shorter working week of 36 hours and even 30 hours while maintaining wages as paid for 40 hours.

Very important were strikes in which the overriding demands were consultations with the unions when introducing new (especially automated) equipment likely to involve redundancies (for example, New York printers in 1974), the establishment of a guaranteed annual wage (the dockers' strike in the same year) the allocation of sufficient federal funds for maintaining and extending employment (teachers' strikes in the 70s).

Attempts to affect employment through regulated work time were a feature in one degree or another of many strike actions beyond the USA as well. A typical example was the strikes by West German and Belgian iron and steel workers in 1978. The Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Union advanced as a major demand shorter working time and less overtime work in 1979 in its series of brief strikes involving some 2 million people.

The nature of present-day unemployment, particularly its age and industrial-occupational characteristics (the highest level among young people and women and the growing structural disparity between the demand and supply of labour power) prompts trade unions and workers' parties to seek new forms of struggle for employment. Demands for the job placement of young people, the establishment and improvement of national vocational guidance systems, the training and re-training of the work force are all having an increasingly important place. During the 70s such demands came to

¹ *L'Unità*, September 7, 1973, p. 7.

the forefront in union platforms and the practical actions of French workers. They were part of the demands in several strikes in Italy, particularly the 12 million-strong strike in January and the 18 million-strong strike in March 1976. And they have comprised an integral part of the "spring offensive" programmes in Japan of recent years.

At the end of the 70s the mass actions against unemployment went beyond national boundaries. A remarkable international action of that kind was the demonstration in defence of jobs that took place on the call of the European Trade Union Confederaion on 5 April 1978 in 18 countries of Western Europe. More than 15 million people took part in it. In helping to consolidate the ranks of the working class in combating unemployment, strike measures of a demonstrative nature are, however, insufficient. The labour movement had to master more effective means of affecting employment. The experience of the Italian working class is interesting in that respect. Throughout the winter of 1973-1974 the workers of such concerns as FIAT, Pirelli, IRI, ENI, Snia Viscosa and some others presented a demand to the employers to make fresh investment not in the highly-developed northern regions replete with industrial firms, but in the South with its most acute paucity of jobs. Participants in the strikes, supported by the full weight of the trade union movement, succeeded in overcoming resistance from the monopolies and the state technocracy: one company after another was forced to pledge to expand employment in the South—altogether 100,000 new jobs.¹ True, the crisis that began shortly afterwards interrupted implementation of those pledges, but the struggle left a marked imprint upon the labour movement.

Demands to force capitalists to pursue an employment policy that met the workers' interests were, along with occupations and work-ins, the farthest extent of the strike movement in the 70s in the fight for the right to work. The most important consequence of the advance of leading sections of the labour movement to that point was the legitimate rise in level of the addressee: the cutting edge of such strike demands was inevitably turned against the state.

Thus, during the 70s we saw a tendency for the labour movement to shift through a number of intermediate demands of the strike struggle for employment to the battle against the ruling-class policy, the battle for a change in the nature of state intervention in the economy. In countries where that tendency was weaker the effectiveness of strikes as a means of safeguarding jobs was less impressive. In the USA, for example, given the very wide scope of strikes against redundancies and for extension of employment, the

¹ *Rassegna sindacale*, No. 51, 1974, p. 203.

trade union leadership turned its back not only on attempts to channel these popular actions into politics, but also on using all the legal means it possessed for putting pressure on Congress where the Hawkins-Humphrey Jobs Bill was being debated. The then President of the AFL-CIO, George Meany, made no bones about his position: he "slammed the door on any possibility that AFL-CIO might demand quick Congressional and Presidential action to start a massive jobs program".¹

The same tendencies that cause panic and alarm among the ruling elite are apparent in the everyday strike struggle, are growing out of, it seems, the most common economic labour disputes. During the 70s those tendencies, according to Western sociologists, led to a situation where the strike acquired completely different dimensions, was permeated with a spirit of "bucking the system", became an "expression of counter-policy" whose objective "went far beyond economic parameters".² The economic demands of strikers under state-monopoly capitalism in many cases turn out to be directed against the bourgeois state, and acquire objectively anti-capitalist orientations. New socio-political elements are apparent at the same time also in those very numerous strike actions that advance more traditional demands which do not directly affect the system of monopoly domination. That is typical, for example, of strikes associated with a more frequent and larger-than-hitherto increase in wages (demands for a 25-40 per cent rise are no longer a rarity). Symptomatically, even many moderate union leaders are convinced of the need to advance demands to adjust wages to inflation.

The serious economic setbacks of the early 70s in the capitalist countries made certain adjustments to the strike struggle situation, to the demands of its participants.

Before the 1974-1975 crisis, employers rarely resorted to mass lockouts. That was due mainly to the relatively high level of demand for labour. In the latter part of the decade and the early 80s, given the existence of mass and chronic unemployment, the employers began widely to use the lockout against strikers, which considerably hampered actions by the latter. The most notorious cases of lockout were in 1978, in the iron and steel and the printing industry in West Germany, and in 1980, in many branches of the Swedish economy.

The employment problem became a central issue for strikers. The already-reviewed practice of seizing enterprises moved on and became wider. It was resorted to frequently by shipbuilders, miners,

¹ *Daily World*, November 13, 1976, p. 5.

² G. Sartori, "Il potere del lavoro nella società post-pacificata", *Rivista italiana di scienza politica*, No. 1, 1973, pp. 40-41.

textile workers, print workers and other groups and by employees in many transnational corporations. Along with that, mounting solidarity and mutual assistance among various contingents of the working class and the whole working population appeared in many instances in the crisis and post-crisis period a distinguishing feature of the strike struggle accompanying factory occupations. Specific demands of strikers to renew production were often mingled with slogans for overall reduction in unemployment through cutting work time and establishing the priority of employment in the state's investment policy.

With the onset of the economic crisis, which not only hindered the fight for higher wages, but also was accompanied by an unprecedentedly stable and headlong rise in the cost of living, the issue of safeguarding wages from inflation also became more urgent for the working class. That situation, which remained typical of the whole latter half of the 70s and the early 80s, was aggravated by the fact that under the guise of austerity policy monopoly capital rigorously attacked workers' socio-economic interests. In many strike battles that took place after the onset of economic crisis, the working class had to defend the ground it had gained. That related not only to wage rates, but to various fringe benefits as well and the whole system of social insurance and security. The social dismantling policy to which the ruling class made a sharp turn from the mid-70s worsened the opportunities of wide sections of working people in the area of health, education and culture. Defence of social gains was the principal motive of a whole number of strikes and other mass actions by blue- and white-collar workers. Extensive actions against the cutting of budget allocations for social needs took place in the latter part of the 70s in Italy, France, Britain and a whole series of other capitalist countries.

Mounting resistance by the monopolies to workers' demands for higher wages, coupled with rising inflation and a growth in partial unemployment led to a situation where from the mid-70s strikers in their demands began to pay more attention to means and systems capable of automatically compensating for both the rising cost of living and in some cases for the loss from forced reductions in work-time. Even at the threshold and at the beginning of the crisis, with the first symptoms of growing unemployment and inflation, the workers of several countries managed to establish or spread those systems to numerous groups of working people. In Italy, for example, as a result of the 1973-1974 strikes, there was extensive development of an "integrated fund", paying out to workers a large part of the wages not received owing to stoppages and reduction in working week beyond their control. The slogan of many wild-cat strikes in West Germany in 1973 was the introduction of cost-of-

living wage adjustments; workers at a whole number of factories succeeded in getting this implemented.

The demand for escalator clauses became popular. It became a major orientation of the strike struggle by American workers and was won practically by all the major unions. By the mid-70s the wages of some 10 million workers came under the escalator clause as opposed to 2 million in the early 60s.¹ Workers in capitalist countries had to fight dogged defensive battles against the assaults by monopolies trying to demolish the escalator clause. Dutch workers gave a powerful rebuff to such attempts in 1977. Practically all branches of the economy in the country became involved in strikes and protest demonstrations that forced the ruling class to retreat. The escalator clause mechanism is not the only means the workers used in the battle to maintain wage purchasing power. In some countries the key issue sometimes became the demand to guarantee the bottom limit of wages at a level corresponding to the subsistence minimum for a worker's family. France and Japan provide the most vivid examples of that kind of struggle. At the same time, no matter in which of the two ways the movement for a guaranteed wage develops, it reflects popular understanding of the people's social right. In other words, the result was a deepening of the *socio-political* content of the strike platforms.

Demands that did not fit into the traditional framework of collective bargaining practice were being made with increasing frequency from the late 60s in strikes that took place on the scale of enterprises, workshops and smaller divisions. Only at first glance did it seem to be the case, as before, of higher wages, shorter working time and smaller work loads. In the new circumstances these demands were changing their form and expanding. For example, in many cases workers were not confining themselves to a definite sum as a rise, they were after a revision of the very structure of wages so as to weaken the effect of that of its variable which plays the part of economic stimulus for work intensification, the sweat system element. The slogan of strikers often became, for example, "Equal rises for all". Many strikes at big Italian and French firms were called under that slogan.

The clause on shorter working time underwent a similar modification. Strikers now included in that notion not only a reduction in total work time during the week and longer holidays, but also an increase in time for performing work operations, as well as breaks, compensation breaks, etc.

Demands for improving work conditions altered most of all. The

¹ *Inflation: Causes, Consequences, Cures*, London, 1975, p. 78; *Monthly Labour Review*, Vol. 97, No. 7, July 1974, p. 25.

very concept of work conditions expanded as never before. Strikers were demanding an end not simply to traditional manifestations of poor conditions (noise, heat, humidity, noxiousness, etc.) but to such elements as monotony, repetitiveness of operations or movements, extreme concentration of attention, uncomfortable body postures, etc. In presenting such demands, workers increasingly rejected additional pay offers in exchange for consent to continue work in harmful conditions. Such demands as participation of personnel representatives in determining composition of production teams and work loads and consultations over the introduction of new machinery were also becoming more and more prominent in strike platforms. Workers, especially the younger ones, were insistently pressing for liberalisation of factory discipline.

The shift of emphasis from the consequences of capitalist exploitation to the process itself was the overall orientation of that change of demand. In describing this qualitative change, the periodical of the General Italian Confederation of Labour wrote of the shift of accent from the tariff, "cash-compensatory" problem to variegated, economic, technological, social and organisational, aspects of using labour.¹ The new elements typical of the factory strike demands were the content of work, job organisation and the status of the hired worker in the work process.

Prominent among the enterprises and industries that became in the early 70s the arena of tough labour disputes on those issues were those with a high proportion of large-scale serial and mass conveyor-line production. In the period 1970-1972, virtually no developed capitalist country avoided large-scale strikes at its motor and electrical engineering works where that form of production typically predominated. In 1972 general attention in the USA and beyond its borders was centred on a spontaneous strike in Lords-town, Ohio, at the General Motors plant. The plant had most up-to-date technology and was planned for super-high work rates. The workers protested against the monotony and exhausting intensification of their jobs, demanded a slower conveyor speed and shorter working week. In essence that was the first big strike during which workers pressed for changes in work organisation rather than wage emoluments.

Deep-seated dissatisfaction with their status at work and a desire for cardinal changes in work organisation and its humanisation were apparent among the conveyor-belt proletariat in those strikes. It is hardly surprising that attempts to map out a specific route to a new work organisation were made in strike platforms. For example, the list of demands by participants in the 2 month-long

¹ *Rassegna sindacale*, No. 3, 1971, p. 71.

strike of nearly 200,000 FIAT workers in Turin, the workers in Renault factories in France, those at many British factories, Baden Württemberg metal workers and American auto workers contained such points as replacing the excessively elementary operations by more meaningful ones requiring longer time, knowledge and skill; the introduction of a turnover of jobs done at various sectors of the plant, in different operations and on various equipment; the adoption of a skill scale with a small number of rating instead of an artificially complicated classification that masked the actual equality of workers with no skills by a multiplicity of tariff ratings, etc.

In the initial period, strike platforms carried the demand for democratic control in a limited and mainly negative form: they referred only to depriving the management of the sole right to determine conditions and organisation of work. Subsequently, as the demand spread engulfing a wide variety of skills and social groups, it began to gain a deeper content. For example, the demand was voiced for the books to be opened up (i. e. to give workers information on the company's state of affairs and its economic policy); that demand was made throughout the 70s in some British strikes. In 1975 the demand for trade union control over investment and employment became a key factor in the platforms of powerful strikes in support of new industrial collective agreements in Italy. In France occupation strikes at the Lip and Rateau factories, the Budat garment-making factory in Toulon and other enterprises were normally accompanied by a demand to extend control by workers and their organisations to investment policy and the technical production planning of the respective companies.

These demands particularly resounded when such sections of the work force as technicians and engineers, research workers, teachers and lecturers, health workers and those in the culture industry and mass media entered the fight. The concepts of work organisation and work content among those types of employees often included conditions directly connected with fundamental aspects of operation of certain public institutions. Thus, in the struggle of the American teachers, demands for smaller classes and higher salaries in primary schools and ghettos featured highly. While for the teachers themselves this was a fight in the traditional area of working conditions and pay, for the country the problems on which the teachers were acting had a much wider socio-political significance. In the mid-70s demands for the right to intervene and for democratic control over propaganda output were made during strikes of journalists, editors and other publishers personnel, printers and broadcasting stations staff.

Where reformist forces predominate in the labour movement, the new tendencies objectively taking shape as the class struggle un-

folds, run up against strong opposition. In that event, as the experience of the late 60s and the 70s shows, the share of wild-cat strikes and other actions unsanctioned by the leadership (or aimed against the leadership) rises considerably.

The situation in the US union movement is a good example; here the movement of rank-and-file union members opposed to the bureaucratic union elite is growing. The most effective form of protest used by the rank-and-file here is the wild-cat strikes that bourgeoned in the 70s. The record in that respect belongs to the miners whose union until recently had been headed by reactionary leadership that renounced strikes. The first national strike by public employees in the country's history, that of 200,000 postal workers in March 1970, was also called without the go-ahead and against the will of the union leadership. In Sweden, the annual number of participants in unsanctioned strikes in industry between 1971 and 1977 was much higher than the number of "legitimate" ones.¹

The fight to change work organisation, and, even more so, for control of managerial actions by the employers has required more flexible, operative forms of collective bargaining capable of embracing more and more new aspects of labour relations. That is why the shift in demands was everywhere being accompanied by increased splintering, reduced level of settlements and reduced period of action in the corresponding agreements. For example, in Italy up to the early 60s the industrial collective agreement, renewed once every 3 years by negotiations between the leaders of industrial unions and the employers' confederation, had pride of place in collective agreement practice. With the switch in emphasis of the strike struggle to such issues as work organisation, strikes developed under the slogan of supplementing the industrial agreements with individual contracting—i.e. agreements concluded by union locals with individual employers. Such agreements could cover a group of enterprises, a single enterprise or even a workshop; their period of validity was, normally, short. Quite a flexible system was taking shape by which workers could consolidate even in contractual form certain fairly specific details of labour relations at the enterprise.

It is noteworthy that the tendency to reduce the validity period of collective agreements in the 70s was occurring also where a strike apparently lacked express demands for democratic control. That was typical, in particular, of the USA and West Germany. In other words, the frequent re-signing of agreements with the accompanying act of discussing a wide range of issues at the factory, the involvement in discussion of the local union leaders and workers'

¹ *Statistik årsbok för Sverige 1978*, Stockholm, 1978, p. 261.

heightened attention in ever new aspects of labour relations were all becoming typical of capitalist enterprises.

At the same time it is clear that the conflict within the bounds of the enterprise or a group of enterprises belonging to one company is as before preferable from the viewpoint of capitalist society as a whole to confrontation on a wider scale. Within a single factory it is easier to damp down discontent through material concessions, to sow the illusion of the "natural" dependence of wages on the level of profits. The risk of splintering the working class, locking within individual enterprises, is undoubtedly the reverse side of the development of the strike struggle mainly on a factory level.

Slogans of fighting for power sharing and the right to control sometimes gave encouragement to anarcho-syndicalist moods and to extreme left-wing groups that tended to see these strikes as the establishment of "socialism at the plant" and called for the immediate introduction of "self-government". The only result could be isolation of individual sections of workers. Experience acquired by the labour movement in the 70s debunked that type of thinking, although such ideas remained partly in the activity of the French Democratic Confederation of Labour, the Italian Confederation of Trade Unions and the British Institute for Workers' Control, as well as a few other less significant groups.

For all the importance of enhanced struggle at factory level things are not confined to that alone. There is an *extension of the scale and political effect* of the strike movement. The very practice of struggle more and more clearly demonstrates to workers that under state-monopoly capitalism they cannot resolve many acute socio-economic problems, let alone resolving political problems, through strikes alone against individual capitalist companies (or state-capitalist corporations). Expansion of the range of requirements and concerns of workers, the spreading of those concerns to such issues as price fluctuations, public services, the transport situation, children's institutions and hospitals is altering the scope of strike demands into the bargain.

Behind this shift lies workers' cultural development, a strengthening of their organisation and the successes of world socialism. The expansion of the state's social functions is a no less important prerequisite for including new social demands in the range of strike demands (whose satisfaction has never hitherto been seen as attainable through a strike). Thus, a central motive for the 10 million-strong May 1968 strike in France was the demand to revoke government ordinances that had a year earlier altered the social security system to workers' detriment. At the end of the same year and beginning of the following year two national strikes in Italy (with

12 million and 18 million participants respectively) forced the government substantially to alter the law on pensions; that was probably the first occasion in the country's history when a strike affected state social policy. In November 1969 there took place an unprecedented 20 million-strong general strike of Italian workers whose main slogan was to implement a democratic housing reform. From early 1970 a whole series of strikes—both national and regional—took place under that slogan as well as in support of the demand to reform the taxation system; many millions of Italian workers took part in them.

From late 1972 the battle slogans called for ending the backwardness of the South, surmounting the crisis in farming, adopting measures on encouraging the economy and expanding employment. More than 10 general strikes (with between 7 million and 20 million participants) and a number of industrial and regional strikes took place in support of those demands in 1973 and 1974. The national strike held in the autumn of 1977 involved 2 million farm labourers; that and other actions by agricultural workers in the southern provinces pressed for increased farm production and modernisation of its technology.

In the course of that struggle the all-embracing slogan "For a New Type of Development" gained increasingly profound and specific meaning. What this meant was to subordinate the country's economic development and especially the investment and production policy of the monopolies to satisfying the public's social needs and, on that basis, to correct the disproportions in the national economy (north-south, industry-farming, etc.). With the onset of the crisis, defence of national production from being curtailed and, simultaneously, its reconstruction in accordance with the prime needs of society gained top priority. General strikes involving many millions were organised in 1975 and 1976 for these objectives. In the autumn of 1976 a campaign was launched for "10 days of struggle" to back the demands of the Communist and other left parties for pursuing a new, democratic economic policy.

The picture was more or less the same in France in those years. From the end of 1970 there developed a struggle to protect wages from depreciation: workers had managed to gain a wage rise in 1968. The slogan of the struggle was "A Pension and 1000 Francs". This referred to a reform demanded in the pension system and the raising of the guaranteed wage minimum to 1000 francs. Two national weeks of action (in the form of short-term strikes, protest meetings and demonstrations) took place in support of the slogan in 1971, with the number of participants being 2.5 and 4 million; these were followed by a national strike in June 1972. The campaign had partial success. Subsequently, questions of employment guarantees (in-

cluding the securing of opportunities for re-training in the case of redundant workers) and defence of the rights of young workers came to the forefront. Throughout 1973 these demands were thrice backed up by national days of action. The struggle mainly in the form of national industrial and inter-industrial quick-fire strikes vigorously continued in the subsequent years. In the latter part of the 70s such actions, aimed largely at protecting employment and against rising prices, took place in the iron and steel, textile, chemical, printing, wood-processing, shipbuilding and other industries. As a rule, national days of struggle occurred twice a year.

The growing scope of demands in the workers' "spring" and "autumn offensives" in Japan is noteworthy. On a par with demands to increase wages and introduce a 40-hour week, Japanese workers from the early 70s put forward demands for a better health service and social security system (especially for the aged), environmental protection and measures to improve public housing conditions. The demand for anti-inflationary measures was the crux of the 1974 "spring offensive". In 1975 and 1976 it was spelt out in more detail: the strikers were insisting on improved anti-monopoly legislation and the foiling of attempts to increase payment for public services.

As the genuine vanguard of the working class, Communists directly and through the unions act as energetic participants in the proletariat's strike battles. In those countries, like Italy and France, where Communist parties play a considerable part in the union movement, their political slogans exert a big influence on the nature of strikers' demands. It is in those countries that slogans of a socio-economic nature which strikers advance often have a political orientation: they are intended for deep-going economic and social reforms and serious political changes. In all countries Communists regard strikes by workers as a necessary school of class struggle, as an important stage in workers' growing class self-awareness. By virtue of this they themselves widely take part in mass actions, head many of them, and the true tactical calculation and militant spirit that they bring to the ranks of strikers are growing. At the same time, Communists constantly emphasise the strategic tasks of the labour movement and their priority within class struggle, pointing the people towards political actions, towards consolidating proletarian solidarity on both a national and an international scale.

Strike actions in support of demands of a directly political nature were growing from the late 60s and during the 70s. Continuing the internationalist and anti-war traditions of the international proletariat, the workers in several countries took part in protest strikes against US aggression in Vietnam. Democratic forces in Spain, Greece, Portugal and Chile owe a debt of gratitude to dock workers in West European ports who more than once refused to unload ships

flying the flags of the reactionary dictatorial regimes. In the spring of 1972 the Ruhr working class went on strike and held demonstrations in support of Willy Brandt's Ostpolitik, demanding urgent ratification of peace treaties with the USSR and other socialist states.

Political slogans were part and parcel of strike platforms. For example, during strikes in the first part of the 70s the demand for a general amnesty and democratisation of the regime was often made in Spain. In Denmark, the reason for one of the biggest strike actions in the country's post-war history was the Hadsund affair: conviction by a bourgeois court of two union activists for organising strikes. More than 100,000 people took part in a solidarity strike in August 1973. Each strike organised under political slogans serves to confirm the growth in awareness and class maturity of the workers.

At the same time, the mounting strike movement at the end of the 60s and beginning of the 70s showed that a certain type of large-scale strike was starting to take shape, preparing and causing socio-political crises that the capitalist system had not experienced in more peaceful periods of its history. "Red May" in France in 1968, the "hot autumn" of 1969 in Italy, the tussle with the miners and other sections of workers in 1974 in Britain, that was to prove so costly for the Conservative government, general strikes in Catalonia in 1972, and the Basque country in Spain in 1974 and 1976 were all peaks of everyday class struggle that tower above the average. The consequences of such strikes, even in cases where their initial slogans were clearly confined to economic demands, had an important political significance. Serious changes in the social situation, in the balance of class forces, in the attitudes and normal views of millions of people were their result. They led to such gains that would have been impossible to wrench from the ruling class not long before.

For example, the May-June strike of 1968 in France brought in its wake not only a big rise in wages and other specific gains inscribed in the Grenelle protocol. A national agreement was signed in February 1969 on employment guarantees, in some measure restricting the right of employers to sack workers. In June 1970, an agreement was signed between the Conseil National du Patronat Français and the unions to further the system of vocational training. In the same year a number of agreements guaranteed the gradual transfer of 5 million workers to monthly payment (which brought them in line with white-collar employees in terms of several socio-economic rights). These and many other smaller concessions on the part of the government and employers reflected their fear of repetition of the 1968 events and their urge to avert them. The personal power regime received a nasty shock and was forced

hurriedly to resort to reshuffling within the administrative apparatus.

The impact that the "hot autumn" of 1969 had on Italian society and state was similarly not exhausted by the almost complete satisfaction of those concrete demands that had been made in the strikers' platforms: substantial wage rises equal for all, a 40-hour week with strict regulation of overtime, elimination of differences between blue- and white-collar workers in calculating various types of social insurance payments and the extension of trade union rights at the enterprise. Regional self-management, a measure which the democratic forces had not been able to attain for 20 years, was introduced under the impact of the new atmosphere created by the "hot autumn".

To a huge extent the process of democratisation in Spain was speeded up by the above-mentioned big strikes at the beginning of the 70s. The second of the national miners' strikes in Britain in 1974 (the first was in 1972) led not only to the fall of the Conservative government, but also to further leftward shifts in the alignment of social forces.

A special type of large-scale strike developed in the Scandinavian countries. It grew out of the regional specific nature of collective agreement regulation consisting in its centralised forms. Direct confrontation between the leading trade union organisations and national associations of employers had already in the 60s harboured the risk of far-reaching labour disputes. In 1973 it led to a general strike in Denmark involving all the basic sections of the industrial proletariat and more working days were lost than in all the strikes of the 60s taken together. Most notably, the objective of this strike was not simply better employment conditions in the new collective agreement but also the insertion of several changes to state social policy.

A big strike by Swedish workers in the spring of 1980 was a form of national protest by the working class against the socio-economic policy of the monopolies and bourgeois government. Its prelude was the union decision to halt overtime work in all industries in response to the employers' refusal to raise wages when renegotiating the national collective agreement. Then the unions called a strike involving more than 100,000 people. The subsequent lockout led to a situation where about a million people took part in the greatest labour dispute in the country's history. Sweden's economic life was almost completely brought to a standstill. As many as 85 per cent of all industrial enterprises were shut down, shops and the post service closed and transport ground to a halt. Fearing a further escalation of the dispute and destabilisation of the country's socio-political life, the employers and the bourgeois government were

forced to make certain concessions to union demands. An appreciable blow was dealt to the state-monopoly policy of blocking higher wages.¹

Apart from their scope, what was common to that type of strikes was the combination of economic, social and political demands (not necessarily even equally clear-cut in the strike platform), which drew into the conflict the state itself as well as various groups of capitalists. This circumstance was what determined the emergence of a national crisis. An increasingly salient tendency in the class battles was the development of the economic struggle into actions against the whole system of state-monopoly domination.

Thus, at the end of the 60s and during the 70s the industrial working class and most diverse sections of workers, despite the unfavourable economic circumstances, more and more widely used and improved the tested proletarian strike weapon both to defend their direct interests and to attack the positions of state-monopoly capitalism.

ENHANCED ROLE OF TRADE UNIONS IN CLASS STRUGGLE

The further leftward shift of the trade unions and their politicisation, already clearly marked in the mid-60s, was part of a fresh rise in the labour movement which in one way or another affected practically all the advanced capitalist countries. Even such traditional bastions of "class peace" as the USA, West Germany and Sweden were joining the movement. The powerful rise in the strike struggle in that period inflicted an appreciable blow on attempts by the ruling class to integrate the working class and unions into the system of state-monopoly capitalism.

The worsening of the class struggle in capitalist countries and the new problems the unions faced in the course of capitalist development, like the adverse effects of the scientific and technological revolution, the growth and strengthening of transnationals, inflation and the world economic crisis, were all sapping reformist illusions among the mass of union members, and enhancing the move towards labour unity on a national and international scale.

The degree of intensity and forms of manifestation of that process were naturally far from identical. In countries with a relatively high level of workers' class awareness and strong trade unions, the new appreciable growth in militant mood by trade unionists caused the most far-reaching effects.

¹ Rodney Öhman, "Social Explosion in Sweden", *World Marxist Review*, No. 7, 1980, pp. 99-102.

In *Italy* from the mid-60s the 3 largest national union organisations began to act in concert more and more frequently. These were the General Italian Confederation of Labour (CGIL) traditionally associated with the Italian Communist Party and the Italian Socialist Party, the Catholic Italian Confederation of Trade Unions (CISL) and the Italian Union of Labour (UIL) following the Socialists, Social Democrats and Republicans. In the situation of mass activity and stormy strike struggle a common strategy was hammered out which became in turn a powerful factor of unity. Already in 1966 the union organisations agreed on their attitude to economic programming, and in 1968 they put forward joint demands for reforms in health, pension provision and housing construction. Demands for a new economic policy were becoming increasingly marked in the strategy.

Successes of concerted action by the CGIL, CISL and UIL at factories and in industries raised the question in the 60s of organic union unity—i. e. the establishment of a common union structure for the whole country. That proposition evoked a wide-ranging discussion of the principles of unity, the strategy of a single union organisation and its place in society. The development of the class struggle led to a leftward shift in the CISL, which was gradually shedding the influence of the ruling Christian Democrats, and to a strengthening of left-wing tendencies in the UIL.

Events of the "hot autumn" of 1969 provided a fresh strong impulse to fortifying the process of uniting Italian unions. The substantial socio-economic achievements gained during the joint actions demonstrated the immense importance of unity. As a result of lengthy and dogged struggle by advocates of labour unity, a national federation came into being in 1972; it embraced the 3 main union organisations while preserving their complete autonomy. Despite the fact that this was far from an organic unity of the Italian labour movement, the federation's establishment made it possible to work out a common policy and common positions in the socio-economic struggle, and to establish single leadership in the workers' major actions.

Progress along the path of unification and development of union strategy also helped to increase union membership. While in 1973 the CGIL had 3,600,000 members, the CISL 2,200,000, and the UIL some 800,000, in 1977 the membership had increased to 4,300,000 for the CGIL, 2,800,000 for the CISL, and over a million for the UIL.¹

Between 1973 and 1975 the unions shifted from fighting for individual reforms (pension provision, health service, transport and

¹ *L'Unità*, May 1, 1977.

housing) to the fight for a range of mutually-connected changes aimed at radically altering the direction of development of Italian economic and social affairs. During the campaign for the 1975 collective agreements, the unions, within the bounds of demands for a "new development model", were agitating for a change in policy as regards the capital investments and the state sector in the economy, for the priority tackling of problems of the South, of transport, farming, construction and the power industry. And all that was in close association with the battle for employment and wages, in defence of incomes and the extension of workers' rights at enterprises.

That strategy was set out in the most clear-cut form in the 1977 platform presented to political parties during their talks on a joint government programme. The unions set forth the following demands: adoption of a law on the sources of financing reconversions and industrial programmes; determination of terms for financing enterprises in accordance with industrial programmes and with the pledges of enterprises on employment and development of the South; the establishment of funds for financing the state sector and enervating its activity; practical application of agrarian laws, including implementation of a reform of agrarian agreements, lifting restrictions on the working of unused and poorly-used lands, and elaboration of a plan for the South; adoption of programmes—in the social sphere, in energy (envisaging priority development of nuclear power) and transport (envisaging comprehensive development of all forms of transport).¹

The unions emphasised that they did not seek to replace political parties. The principle of trade union autonomy adopted back in the late 50s and early 60s by the entire Italian labour movement means primarily removing their dependence on bourgeois and reformist parties. It is hardly surprising that this problem was particularly acute for the CISL and the Christian Democrats. At the same time right-wing union leaders were trying to interpret the "autonomy" problem so as to facilitate their task of shielding workers from the mounting influence of the Communist Party. Adoption by unions of the principle of the "incompatibility" of trade union posts with leading posts in parties, administrative and elective state bodies was a specific manifestation of the autonomy of Italian unions and meant, on the one hand, a change in forms of relations with worker parties and, on the other, a form of protection from direct interference by bourgeois parties, which, of course, was in the nature of a compromise.

Working-class parties and unions operate in the same direction,

¹ *L'Unità*, June 24, 1977.

with a single goal, but each in their own sphere and by different methods. As the front of union struggle deepens and widens, as the unions' involvement in issues of big politics increases, the close interaction of working-class parties and unions acquires increasing importance for both sides. That is evident from the joint national campaigns organised in the 70s, both with socio-economic and with political demands.

In *France*, as in *Italy*, for a long time a schism seriously hampered the trade union movement and was one of the major reasons for the fairly low proportion of organised workers (25 per cent).

The Confédération Générale du Travail (CGT—General Confederation of Labour) with 2,350,000 members remained the biggest and most influential union organisation. Relying on a ramified network of its branches, on co-operation with the French Communist Party, the CGT sought to extend the scale of worker actions to the maximum, to give a political edge to the strike movement. Next in union membership was the Confédération Française Démocratique du Travail (CFDT) with 1,150,000 members. The membership of the Force Ouvrière (FO) headed by right-wing reformist leaders varied around the million mark. Other organisations lagged considerably behind the mighty trio in membership: the Fédération de l'Education Nationale (FEN) with 550,000 members, the Confédération Générale des Cadres (CGC) with 325,000 members and the Confédération Française des Travailleurs Chrétiens (CFTC—French Confederation of Christian Workers) with approximately 200,000 members.¹

The joint campaigns by the CGT and CFDT launched on a nationwide scale in 1966 and 1967 helped to reinforce working-class faith in the workers' own power and served as an important prerequisite for the maturation of the socio-economic crisis of May-June 1968.² It was that crisis which gave a powerful push to the leftward process within the unions and encouraged the urge for unity.

The scope of demands made by the unions on employers and the state substantially widened, and their participation in the country's political affairs grew. Thus, in mounting the campaign for meeting the workers' traditional demands in the area of wages, working conditions, employment, pension provision and duration of the working week, the CGT from the late 60s sharply increased emphasis on demands for democratic management of the economy at all levels—factories, industries and the economy as a whole.

The CGT was proposing in particular, a democratisation of the composition of the Republic's Economic and Social Council by ex-

¹ All figures for the end of the 70s.

² See Chapter Ten.

tending representation of workers' organisations within it and changing the council's functions, turning them from consultative into directive, and also co-ordinating the Council's activity with planning organisations (central and local) and factory committees. At the same time, the CGT was demanding an extension of the powers of factory committees elected by workers.

It was also proposing a stronger role for union and worker representatives in management boards of enterprises in the state sector. The worker members of factory boards and committees were to have greater opportunities for carrying out their functions effectively. The planning bodies would be obliged, according to the CGT proposals, to provide maximum information to the factory committees.¹

By contrast with the CFDT, the CGT did not believe that unions should distance themselves as far as possible from the political sphere; on the contrary, it saw one of its paramount tasks in backing progressive and democratic proposals and actions by left-wing parties, first and foremost the Communist Party. While the CGT saw the advance into new areas of the socio-economic struggle logically following from the class stand it had traditionally taken, for the CFDT that advance was the result of considerable qualitative shifts in its political orientation. The strengthening of left-wing elements in the CFDT led to a situation where this once-Christian union that had favoured a policy of class collaboration back in the early years of the Fifth Republic moved largely to a class struggle stance. At its 1970 congress it adopted a policy of extending joint action with the CGT. At the same time the congress adopted a new programme in which it declared that the aim of the organisation was to build a new, socialist society based on "le socialisme autogestionnaire" (self-governing socialism).² Regarding demands in the area of income distribution insufficient (although extremely important), the Confederation, more recently, increased emphasis on demands within the sphere of power, decision-making and in cultural and moral-ethical spheres. The "self-governing socialism" slogan was seen by CFDT leaders and ideologists as being a sort of synthesis of those demands. The Confederation maintained that it was necessary to fight for a socialist perspective right at the time, and it advanced the slogan "Life tomorrow in our battles of today".³

In conformity with that slogan the Confederation drew up a plan of reform of the state economic sector according to which personnel at enterprises were to elect councils. The latter were supposed to

¹ *Le Peuple*, May 15, 1977.

² Edmond Maire, Jacques Julliard, *La CFDT d'aujourd'hui*, Paris, 1975, pp. 12, 183.

³ *Syndicalisme magazine, CFDT*, No. 16, June 1976, p. 38.

have the power to adopt—within the state plan—major decisions on issues concerning production (the type of production, technology and work organisation). In turn the council was to elect an executive committee intended to implement everyday control over administration. A similar scheme was worked out also for higher levels of economic planning. In focusing attention on bringing the decision-making system as close as possible to those whom it affects directly, the CFDT nonetheless did not shed its reformist and syndicalist illusions, its underestimation of mass political action, especially at national level, necessary for breaking down the resistance of the ruling class.

The entry of the CFDT into a wider arena of socio-economic and political struggle stimulated further progress in strengthening concerted action by the two most mass and influential French union organisations. More and more frequently the CGT and CFDT held “days” and “weeks” of joint action and co-ordinated their actions on an industrial and a national level. All the major actions by French workers in the 70s were prepared and conducted by concerted efforts of CGT and CFDT activists. The close unity of action by the two confederations is a paramount distinguishing feature of the French union movement in recent years. What is very important is that they conduct a joint struggle not only against individual facets of the Fifth Republic’s socio-economic policy, but also for a radical change in that policy generally. That fact has an immense influence on other unions as well, particularly on the Fédération de l’Education Nationale which from the mid-70s acted in concert with the major forces of the country’s labour movement. Even Force Ouvrière, well known for its divisive and separatist actions, was obliged to adapt itself to the changing situation. In May 1977 it took part for the first time in the general demonstration against the government’s economic policy. Even in the Confédération General des Cadres, despite the strong corporatist, isolationist and anti-socialist mood within it, the left wing markedly came to life.

The vigorous participation of trade unions in political campaigns made a special imprint on political affairs. The adoption of the Joint Programme of the Left on 27 June 1972 became an important milestone in bringing French unions together. The CGT, CFDT and FEN took an active part in the election campaigns of the left on the basis of that programme. Joint action in class battles led to a considerable rapprochement of CGT and CFDT activists and rank-and-file members. Concerted action was steadily becoming a regular feature of trade union activity at many enterprises.

In 1974 and 1975 it was very important for trade unions to overcome the mood of fatalism and passivity among some workers when

confronted by an economic crisis and to prove that concerted action could force the government and employers to back down.

The joint declaration issued by the three left-wing parties and leading union federations in December 1975 set out the major directions of further struggle: higher wages, securing employment, a ban on redundancies without guaranteed job placement and on eviction from housing (for defaulting on rent payments), higher employment through creating new jobs, rigorous observance of the 40-hour week, and greater volume of cheap housing construction. The 38th CFDT Congress in May 1979 announced that "unity of action with the CGT remains an essential element of CFDT strategy. The 26 June 1974 accord ... preserves all its validity."¹ In September 1979 the CGT and CFDT leaders Georges Seguy and Edmond Maire signed a new accord on joint action by the two confederations. Experience of class struggle in recent years has fully testified to the fact that only co-ordinated union action can effectively resist the onslaught of capital.

In addition to France and Italy, where class clashes were the most acute, new tendencies in the union movement in the late 60s and the 70s were quite clearly evident in a number of other advanced capitalist countries.

During the 60s and 70s the trade unions of *Japan* launched a sustained struggle for improving living standards and in defence of workers' economic and political demands.

The biggest national union organisation remained the General Council of Trade Unions of Japan (SOHYO) embracing unions in state and local factories and offices, as well as the private economic sector. According to 1979 figures, SOHYO had 4,553,000 members—i.e. more than a third of the country's union members.²

The All-Japan Congress of Trade Unions (ZENRO) set up in 1954 formed, along with the two other right-wing reformist union organisations, the Japanese Confederation of Labour (DOMEI) in 1964. This was the second biggest union centre with 2,147,000 members at the end of the 70s. It embraced mainly unions in private enterprises in the leading branches of industry. DOMEI advocated the establishment of class collaboration, conducted a collusive policy and was closely bound up with the right-wing reformist Democratic Socialist Party.

The Liaison Council of Neutral Trade Unions (CHURITSU ROREN) had 1,337,000 members and co-operated with SOHYO in organising mass worker actions. The new National Federation of Industrial Trade Unions (SHIN SAMBETSU) lagged way behind

¹ *Syndicalisme. CFDT*, No. 1757, May 17, 1979, p. 27.

² *Japan Labour Bulletin*, April 1980, p. 7.

the other three organisations in membership, involving only 63,000 people.¹ In March 1979, CHURITSU ROREN and SHIN SAM-BETSU signed an agreement on setting up a new union centre—the All-Japan Confederation of Trade Unions.

By the end of the 70s the trade unions involved 12.3 million people, which comprised some 30 per cent of all employed people in the country.² Between 1965 and 1975 union membership steadily rose, but in the latter part of the 70s it fell mainly due to the consequences of the 1974-1975 economic crisis which led to mass redundancies in the key sectors of industry.

Japanese trade unions are organised on the principle that each enterprise has its own union embracing all categories of employees, including white-collar workers and engineering personnel. Primary union branches are highly independent and the great bulk of them are affiliated to one of the industrial and national union centres. But over a third of union members are not in any of the four above-mentioned national centres.

The latter part of the 60s and early 70s witnessed vigorous campaigning by the Japanese working class to protect its vital interests, against the policy of large capital, for peace and democracy. The stubborn fight for higher wages, a better system of social security, for the tackling of ecological, transport and housing problems and over other economic issues was closely bound up with actions under political slogans. At the end of the 60s SOHYO decided to advance as practical objectives of the union struggle "15 vital demands" that went far beyond the bounds of usual demands in the area of wages and working conditions. From the early 70s it launched action that gained the name "fight for life" and assumed the greatest scope during the traditional "spring offensives". For the first time the fusion of the "fight for life" and the "spring offensive" occurred in 1973.³ In view of the considerable extension of the range of demands and the change in the overall nature of the battle, the next "spring offensive", in 1974, was termed "national". As well as specific demands by trade unionists, the slogans of the offensive reflected the interests of wider sections of the public interested in implementing profound social reforms. The most important were the demands to establish an effective system of social security, to change the economic policy towards encouraging greater well-being for wide sections of the populace, and to take radical steps with regard to problems in housing, education, health and environmental protection.

¹ Ibid.

² *Rodo tokei chosa geppo*, Tokyo, March 1980, p. 24; *Nihon tokei geppo*, Tokyo, April 1980, pp. 8, 10.

³ *Shakaito*, Tokyo, No. 211, 1974, pp. 32-33.

The Japanese Communist Party was in the vanguard of the movement to safeguard the vital interests of the people and against the bourgeois government's policy that had led to higher unemployment and inflation. It not only actively supported the trade union struggle, but also exerted persistent efforts to unite sections of the population that were unable to protect their interests through their own efforts.

The contingent of direct participants in the struggle noticeably widened. It involved numerous new sections of trade unions outside SOHYO, as well as the non-union socially deprived (old-age pensioners, the unemployed and other outcasts of capitalist society). During the 1975 "spring offensive" farm labourers and fishermen for the first time came out in united action with the working class. As in 1974, the offensive evoked a broad response among unorganised workers.

The 1974-1975 crisis and the subsequent protracted depression had an adverse effect on the working people's situation. Besides, the trade unions faced with the burgeoning monopoly assault on the workers' interests were unable to consolidate their ranks. Demands by several industrial unions for substantial wage rises did not gain general backing from the leaders of national union centres which agreed between 1976 and 1980 only to an insubstantial increase in wages.

Despite the growing compromising tendencies in trade-union leadership, as many as 8-9 million unionists took part annually in the "spring offensives" of the latter part of the 70s. Wide sections of the populace backed up their struggle with innumerable protest meetings and demonstrations. Demands to halt the inflationary spiral and reduce unemployment were supplemented by proposals to introduce a national minimum wage system, to improve social security, to step up housing construction and to reform medical service. The unions also opposed rationalisation at enterprises when it cut across workers' interests and agitated for better working conditions.

The unions did not confine themselves merely to economic demands, they continued to oppose attempts to resurrect militarism and adopt undemocratic laws, they defended the existing Constitution and the right to strike for those employed in state institutions, and campaigned for peace and the country's neutrality. The difficulties the union movement of Japan had to face in those years once more indicated the importance of the call by its most progressive forces for a united front of organised workers to oppose the united front of employers and governing circles.

But the tendencies manifest in the practical activity of the biggest national union organisation, SOHYO, show that its leader-

ship was departing from former progressive positions and advocating an alliance with the right-wing reformist DOMEI. Politically that found expression in convergence of views and the establishment of an alliance between SOHYO's kindred Socialist Party, KOMEITO ("the party of clean politics" set up in 1964 by followers of the religious-political Buddhist organisation Soka Gakkai) and the Democratic Socialist Party.

In the new situation, the Communist Party in the spring of 1980 called for establishing a national union organisation independent of large-scale capital and political parties. On its initiative, trade unions fighting for labour unity within a single union front came into being in many of the country's prefectures. In the spring of 1980 a united front conference took place at which trade union organisations of 43 of the country's prefectures were represented and which had an extensive public response among working people.

In *Portugal* and *Spain*, trade unions were active participants in the acute political struggle that took place during the 70s. Vigorously safeguarding workers' interests and rights in their relations with the employers, unions in Portugal and their central organisation, Intersindical, came out in close unity with other progressive forces for the consistent implementation of anti-fascist and revolutionary-democratic change. The fight to extend and consolidate the positions of the unions at enterprises, in industries and in the economy generally was an integral part of those efforts.

Intersindical arose as a result of the merging of union associations existing in the south and north of the country. By the end of 1975 it had over a million members. The unions belonging to Intersindical played a decisive role in setting up worker control agencies at factories, which was a paramount gain of the revolution. In the course of the aggravating class struggle the unions managed to gain legislation on basic union rights, limitation of arbitrary action by employers in employment and redundancy, and a certain rise in wages.

A Portuguese Trade Union Congress took place in January 1977, representing in excess of 1.6 million out of the 2 million organised workers.¹ Another 86 organisations had a hand in its work alongside the Intersindical unions. The Congress resolutely rebuffed the enemies of labour unity who had in the months prior to the Congress endeavoured to split the country's union movement, isolate the most progressive of its forces and organisations and prevent a single union organisation. The Congress founded the Confederação General

¹ In the late 70s the proportion of the organised workers among Portugal's work force was one of the highest in the capitalist world—83 per cent (*Avante!*, March 13, 1980).

dos Trabajadores Portugueses—Intersindical Nacional (CGTP-IN). The CGTP-IN action programme ratified by the Congress was based on the need to safeguard the principal gains of the revolution. It demanded the participation of workers and their organisations in drawing up plans for industries and factories, the introduction of workers' control over planning, and an end to interference by political authorities in union affairs. The programme envisaged union fight to consolidate collective agreement practice, to establish strict control over prices, to improve the social security system, to step up housing construction, to achieve regular wage rises and to reduce unemployment. As many as 201 unions with a membership of 1,500,000 were represented at the CGTP-IN Congress of March 1980, which comprised 76.3 per cent of organised workers (including 93 per cent of factory workers, 79 per cent of transport workers, 52 per cent of employees in the services sphere and 36 per cent of technicians and intellectuals). The Congress noted that of the 137 other unions in the country (469,900 members), 61 (with 180,200 members) regularly took part in joint actions together with the CGTP-IN. Only the General Labour Union set up by the Socialist Party in 1979 as a counterweight to the CGTP-IN refused to take part in that action and adhered to a blatantly schismatic stand. It was indicative, however, that it enjoyed no support even among the bulk of unions outside the Intersindical.

The Workers' Commissions of *Spain*, at the new historical stage beginning on Franco's death, joined forces with other progressive elements in the country vigorously to fight for the implementation of profound democratic change. They campaigned for their legal status and broad democratic rights, and also for the disbandment of Franco's "vertical" unions. The close alliance of militant unions and Communists and other democratic forces that had formed in the long years of the underground grew even stronger, and it was not fortuitous that it was this alliance that stood in the vanguard of fighters for a broad coalition of all patriotic and democratic forces.

The Workers' Commissions were and remain the most dynamic and militant organisation of the union movement. In the upsurge of strikes in the spring of 1976 they advanced the slogan of uniting workers under the aegis of a single trade union centre with a class character and open to all, irrespective of party affiliation or religious creed. The existence of that organisation would enable the labour movement swiftly to fill the vacuum formed by the actual disintegration of Franco's "trade unions". By that time the local elective union posts were already overwhelmingly in the hands of Workers' Commissions activists.¹

¹ Julián Ariza, *Comisiones obreras*, Barcelona, 1976, p. 52.

Throughout 1976 and 1977 strong unity tendencies continued to operate in the Spanish labour movement encouraging unions, particularly at the lower level, to act in concert. The Co-ordinating Committee of Union Organisations (COS) came into being in July 1976, on whose initiative a national strike was held on November 12, 1976 involving over 2 million workers. Frictions between union organisations, however, were so acute that they led to the break up of COS in March 1977.

After the legalisation of democratic unions in May 1977 workers began to join the various union organisations. The Workers' Commissions (termed the Trade Union Confederation of Workers' Commissions, CSCO, since the summer of 1976) numbered some 2 million members by the end of the year. The second biggest union centre was the General Workers Union (UGT) closely associated with the Spanish Socialist Labour Party (PSOE), with 1.5 million members. 325,000 members belonged to the third organisation—the Workers Trade Union (USO).¹

The CSCO was particularly strong in key industries (iron and steel, engineering, construction, etc.) whose workers had accumulated a great deal of experience of class struggle during the Franco years. The Workers' Commissions rapidly spread among the agrarian proletariat and poor farmers who created their own national organisation in November 1977. The UGT was stronger among employees in the services sphere (banks, hotel services, etc.). Yet an appreciable number of hired workers remained outside the unions.

The complex conditions of the democratisation process in socio-political structures in the latter half of the 70s to a certain extent increased centrifugal trends in the union movement. Its internal contradictions that had taken a backseat in the preceding period owing to the need for concerted action against Francoism now came more to the fore at the new stage. In 1976 the country had over a score of union centres. In addition, such union centres as the National Labour Confederation (CNT) came to life, rested on traditions that had existed before the establishment of the Franco regime. They advocated pluralism in the union movement which did not preclude, however, as they averred, co-ordinated action among the various union centres.

Although differentiation in the union movement considerably complicated elaboration of a common policy in relations with the employers and government, nonetheless, after the first general elections in June 1977, the democratic unions of the Workers' Commissions and UGT put forward a joint programme aimed at improving the

¹ For USO activity, see José M. Zufiaur, *Unión Sindical Obrera (USO)*, Madrid, 1976.

workers' position. It called for higher wages, a 40-hour week, wider rights for unions at enterprises and measures against unemployment. The employers rejected union demands and refused to enter into negotiations with them, which aggravated the situation. In the interests of consolidating democracy in the country, the left-wing parties signed the Moncloa Pact with the government. Under appreciable influence from left-wing parties the democratic unions accepted the terms of the Pact, one of which was the actual freezing of wages.

Left-wing parties and unions advocating the democratisation of the labour relations system pressed for elections to industrial committees, which were held in 1978 and in which the Workers' Commissions and the UGT confirmed their predominating influence (44 and 28 per cent of the delegates respectively). The Trade Union Confederation of Workers' Commissions jointly with the Communists proposed a plan for socio-economic change which was a democratic alternative to the policy of the ruling circles.

During the drawing up, discussing and approving of the country's Constitution, the CSCO and the UGT came out jointly with all democratic forces in Spain. Their congresses in the summer of 1978 once again underlined the need for joint labour action at the current stage of the fight to stabilise democracy, against any attempts by the right to turn back history, and against terrorism. In the referendum held in December 1978 the unions were in favour of approving the Constitution. The Constitution gave the workers the right to strike and collective bargaining, and the right to organise for all categories of employees save for those subject to military discipline.

On the expiry of the Moncloa Pact at the end of 1978 the government tried to sign a similar new agreement. But the Workers' Commissions and the UGT firmly turned down the proposal, seeing it as an attempt to sign a "social pact". As against the government proposal to limit wage rises in 1979 to 10-13 per cent, the unions were insisting on a minimum of 16 per cent, and also wider rights at factories, creation of new jobs and a more vigorous fight against unemployment. The two unions agreed on drawing up common demands in collective bargaining, which forced the employers in early 1979 to make substantial concessions when concluding collective agreements which covered two million workers.

The fight by democratic unions for workers' rights ran into active resistance from bourgeois-reformist forces trying to make the Spanish labour movement more "moderate" and less politicised. The government and employers' organisations were striving by any means to prevent concerted action by the labour movement. Thus, in playing on the disagreements between the two unions, the Spanish Confed-

eration of Employers' Organisations on July 10, 1979 managed to conclude a fundamental agreement (framework agreement) with the UGT, which exacerbated relations between the two unions, in so far as the UGT had not co-ordinated its actions with the CSCO. The parliamentary debate on the Labour Charter, the document regulating labour relations, at the end of 1979 was also quite bitter. The Workers' Commissions were against those clauses in the Charter that facilitated redundancies, hampered the elaboration of a common union stance towards the employers' policy, against UGT's compromising tactics that opted for negotiations. Relations between left-wing parties had a certain impact on those between the major union organisations. The process of adapting the unions to the new historical circumstances, the search for approaches corresponding to the current stage of development of the labour movement remained fairly complex and contradictory. But at a time of worsening economic conditions, above all growing unemployment and inflation, with the government lacking a clear-cut economic programme, and also in the face of continuing terrorism, the leading unions were feeling the need for concerted action with increasing force.

Shifts in the union movement were not so clear-cut and far-reaching in all countries. In the USA, for example, the traditions of "business unionism", which sees its objective in trading with employers for better economic conditions for union members, without ever questioning the existing capitalist system, were a serious obstacle to radicalising the unions.

A real chasm separates the broad union membership from the elite that has turned into an inert, set caste; in lifestyle and thinking its members are closer to the employers with whom they constantly come into contact around the negotiating table, in Congress committees and joint presidential consultative councils, than to the members they represent.

Another feature of the American union movement, also associated with the continuing "business unionism", is that although it covers over 20 million blue- and white-collar workers, it includes only a small part of the total hired labour. In 1978, US unions had 20.2 million members, which comprised 22.1 per cent of hired labour. In recent years many associations of specialists came close to unions in their demands and methods of struggle (collective bargaining and strikes). Altogether in unions and associations there were 22.8 million people in 1978 or 24.9 per cent of hired labour.¹ The vast mass of workers (agricultural and unskilled urban workers, members of many national minorities, labourers in the South) remained out-

¹ Calculated from: *Statistical Abstract of the US. 1981*, p. 412; *Employment and Earnings*, January 1979, pp. 174, 194.

side labour unions. What is more, from the mid-50s the proportion of unorganised workers markedly increased, inasmuch as the growth in union membership lagged behind the rate of growth of the hired work force.

Yet another consequence of the domination of bourgeois reformism in the American union movement is its great fragmentation. The AFL-CIO alone in 1979 had 103 different unions. There is quite a number of parallel unions (among electrical workers, chemical workers, various groups of civil servants, etc.) rivalling each other.

With the development of state-monopoly capitalism and the growing regulating role of the government (in the USA the government intervenes not only in labour relations, but as in no other Western country, in the internal affairs of the unions), "business unionism" has come a long way: its adherents have revised those notions that hamper co-operation with the state and participation in politics. Links between union leadership and both federal and local agencies of legislative and executive power during the 60s and 70s considerably widened. The same people from the top leadership of AFL-CIO and the largest unions are simultaneously members of a multitude of consultative bodies. The unions enjoy quite a lot of influence in selecting leading personnel for the Department of Labour. The union lobby in Congress and various federal institutions is regarded as being highly authoritative, and the same may be said also for union role on a local level. The huge money unions spend on election campaigns and the part they play in nominating candidates are well known. Despite all of that, what is remarkable is not only the modest nature of the objectives to which they devote all their efforts, but also the limited nature of the results.

For some 30 years, for example, the unions have been unable to revoke the clause of the Taft-Hartley Act that gives states the right to pass laws hampering unionisation of workers. Meanwhile, many union-backed bills have met with defeat.

The coming to power of the Democrat Jimmy Carter revived hopes in the union elite of having a bigger say in Washington. A draft reform of labour legislation was prepared. But very soon a clear-cut anti-labour orientation appeared both in Carter's administration and in Congress. The latter relied on the business-launched anti-union campaign unprecedented in scope to defeat all the basic clauses of the union legislative programme, including reform of labour legislation. The victory of the Republican Reagan at the 1980 presidential elections, and the enhanced positions of conservative forces within Congress, threatened organised workers with a further onslaught on their vital rights by the ruling groups.

Compromise, concessions on issues affecting workers' vital interests, including attempts to diminish the role of the strike as a

campaign weapon—that is the price of connivance by the union elite in “high politics”. True, during the 70s, experiencing ever-mounting pressure from the mass of the rank-and-file, the AFL-CIO was obliged to bring some of its positions up to date. In 1972, under pressure from below, its representatives and those of the United Auto Workers refused to work with the Republican administration in the Council on Wage and Price Stability.

The union rank-and-file is more and more firmly rejecting the policy of replacing strikes as an “undesirable” means of fighting by voluntary arbitration. Thousands of strikes are now being held every year in the USA.

Under pressure from ordinary trade unionists the more flexible and far-sighted part of the union leadership is reorientating itself somewhat on a series of issues. That was encouraged to a high extent in the 70s by changes in the top echelon of the union hierarchy—Meany’s retirement, the marked renewal of the AFL-CIO Executive Committee composition, and the change of leadership in practically all the country’s big unions. As a result a “liberal wing” has formed in union hierarchies, consisting of younger, more educated, independently thinking people who have distanced themselves from the extremes of union bosses of the Meany school.

While generally retaining a conciliatory stance, they are nonetheless taking a new look at a number of fundamental issues. One of the most important is the unionisation of unorganised labour. Responding to the extensive movement of the most exploited sections of the American working class (farm labourers, textile and garment-making workers in the South) and those employed in the state sector and realising that the relatively small numerical strength is the main source of union weakness, the AFL-CIO 12th Convention held in December 1977 was able to surmount the outmoded ideas on that issue and, for the first time since the Unity Convention of 1955, recognised the drawing in of fresh members as a prime task. This was reaffirmed by the following, the 13th, convention in November 1979.

More substantial shifts occurred in the union movement of *Canada*. According to national statistics, by the start of 1978 Canadian unions had 3,278,000 members, of these 2,204,000 (67 per cent) were in the Canadian Labour Congress, the country’s main federation of unions; 178,000 (5.4 per cent) were in the second national union federation, the Confederation of National Trade Unions, largely embracing Quebec workers; the remainder, roughly a quarter of all organised labour, were in unions outside the CLC and the CNTU.¹ Canadian unions were traditionally closely bound up with

¹ *The Toronto Star*, September 29, and October 9, 1978.

the US unions and in many ways dependent upon them. The most numerous were the international unions with dual, American and Canadian, membership. In Canada, they had almost 1.5 million members in 1975—i. e. 51 per cent of the country's organised workers. Only about 7 per cent of the membership of those unions, however, belonged to the Canadian branches.¹ In recent years, the unions and the CLC as a union centre have stepped up the battle for autonomy of the Canadian union movement.

The CLC 1970 convention, under pressure of left-wing forces, approved proposals ensuring Canadian unions, whose steering bodies were in the USA, a certain autonomy. In a number of cases, the CLC began to take up positions at variance with the AFL-CIO. Thus, at various times, the Canadian unions spoke out against the Vietnam war, against US military intervention in the Dominican Republic and condemned the brutality of the fascist junta in Chile.

At the same time, under mounting pressure from below the first steps were taken towards joint union action. In 1972 the CLC was forced to revoke the anti-communist clause of its Constitution and agree to the admission to the Congress of two progressive Canadian unions—the International Union of Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers and the United Fishermen and Allied Workers' Union of British Columbia.

Even earlier, at the end of the 60s, the Quebec unions achieved considerable progress in the matter of co-operation. And in 1972, after a series of joint actions, the Quebec Federation of Labour and the Confederation of National Trade Unions jointly with the Quebec Teachers Corporation set up a Unity Front, which went some way to help reinforce contacts between the various national groups in Quebec itself and in Canada as a whole.

The battle to democratise trade union policy and ensure wide participation by rank-and-file union members in working out CLC policy became an important positive element of the union movement. It was thanks to the efforts of rank-and-file delegates at the 11th CLC Convention in 1976 that the leadership's undemocratic amendments were defeated on the issue of increasing the number of representatives of the union hierarchy at the expense of delegates from local branches.²

In the socio-economic struggle the unions did not confine themselves to local objectives and traditional forms. The CLC had a detailed programme of demands to the government in the area of securing full employment, taxation policy, unemployment insurance, health care, and expanded construction of housing accessible to the

¹ *Labour Organizations in Canada: 1974-1975*, Ottawa, 1975, p. XXIII.

² *Canadian Tribune*, May 25, 1976.

low-paid. Union actions were aimed both against the economic policy of individual monopolies operating in one or another industry and, in some cases, against the very principles of the government's economic policy. Confirmation of that is the CLC initiative in holding an all-Canadian "day of protest" against the government's anti-inflation programme (Bill C-73) on October 14, 1976. That initiative was fully supported by the unions.

The union movement had close relations with the New Democratic Party (NDP). In 1971, of the Party's 350,000 members 260,000 were members of the unions affiliated to the NDP.¹ But in the mid-70s differences increased between the unions and the Party. At the 11th CLC Convention many union delegates roundly assailed the "vague and ambiguous position" of the NDP on government control over wages, while delegates from the Saskatchewan unions even asserted that in their province the NDP was betraying "the interests of the working class".² The 12th CLC Convention held in 1978 adopted important decisions on concrete actions against government wage control which were in many ways a concession by CLC leaders to the rank-and-file.

Yet another indicator of the higher level of socio-economic demands of the unions was the CLC memorandum to the government, ratified at the 11th Convention and known as the Labour Manifesto for Canada. The Manifesto envisaged the introduction of planning principles into the economy, redistribution of national income on a just basis, the reconstruction of the social security and health service system and several other measures in the workers' interests.³

The demands set out in the Manifesto were fully supported by the biggest regional union organisation in the country—the Labour Federation of Ontario (LFO). At its convention held from 27 to 30 November 1979 the Federation (numbering 800,000 members) passed a declaration on government economic policy calling for state ownership of the extractive industry, finance institutions, timber and mineral resources and certain key industries such as aerospace, shipbuilding and telecommunications. The declaration also urged maintaining the Petro-Canada oil company in state hands and called for a national Canadian energy strategy that would first and foremost serve Canadian interests.⁴

The CLC Manifesto, however, also clearly shows a conciliatory trend towards tripartite co-operation between the government, the monopolies and the unions. Proceeding from those notions, the CLC Executive Committee prepared the organisation of a draft

¹ *The Globe and Mail*, April 12, 1971.

² *Canadian Tribune*, June 7, 1976.

³ *Labour Manifesto for Canada*, Ottawa, 1976, p. 13.

⁴ *Canadian Tribune*, October 17, 1979.

resolution for the 12th Convention, envisaging the creation of some sort of tripartite body empowered to deal with jobs and unemployment issues.

In *Great Britain* the process of leftward shift in trade unionism, commencing in the 60s, became markedly stronger at the end of the decade and in the early 70s. The positions of right-wing leaders both in individual unions and in the British Trades Union Congress (TUC) weakened. And although the right wing still maintained its dominant position in the TUC General Council, a group of left-wingers had grown in its body; that group, relying on backing from below, was not infrequently pushing through decisions that were at variance with the leadership's collaborationist policy. Representing 12.1 million organised workers (with a total number of union members of nearly 13.1 million in early 1978¹), the TUC is the only organisation empowered to act in the name of the entire labour movement on a national basis. What is more, insofar as the main, most influential unions in the TUC are also collective members of the Labour Party, there are traditionally close relations of both a formal and an informal nature between the TUC and the Party.

All that, naturally, gave the changes in the positions and leadership of the TUC particular importance.

The TUC and its constituent unions, for a long time under the ideological and political sway of right-wing Labour leaders, began in the late 60s to display mounting independence, increasingly opposing the policy of accord with big capital which the then Labour government was pursuing. In 1969 the TUC and whole union movement vigorously opposed the government's attempts to get parliament to approve a bill that seriously compromised the union right to strike. In a fierce political tussle with the government and with the firm backing of the Labour left the unions succeeded in preventing the bill becoming law. Members of the British Communist Party within the unions put up a particularly resolute fight during this campaign.

The influence of British Communists in the unions grew stronger, which in turn played an important part in the further struggle now against the policy of the Conservative government which came to office in 1970. In 1971 the Tories had parliament ratify the anti-union Industrial Relations Act which surpassed in its toughness the Labour bill of 1969. In 1971-1973 the unions had to overcome the conciliatory forces within their own ranks and conduct a dramatic campaign of boycotting the new legislation. The engineering and transport unions were to the fore in that struggle. No small contribu-

¹ *Labour Research*, 1979, Vol. 68, No. 11, p. 244; *Department of Employment Gazette*, December 1979, p. 1242.

tion to the fight was made also by unions representing junior technical and managerial staff and some categories of office workers. Despite the repression and threats of repression, the union movement gained a remarkable victory: the government was forced effectively to back down from implementing the Act (most employers had done so even earlier) and shift to checking union demands by legislative restriction of wage rises. But those methods did not ultimately produce the desired results either; when the government attempted to reject the just demands of the miners for higher wages an acute political crisis arose which ended in the government's fall.

A principal aspect of the union movement's more radical approach in the late 60s and early 70s was the more resolute advancement of far-reaching socio-economic demands—for nationalisation of several important economic sectors, the introduction of state control over the biggest monopolies, a wealth tax and substantial improvements in the social services. Yet while the mass of people took part in the fight for purely economic goals of a traditional nature (higher wages, better working conditions, etc.) and in defence of union rights, that can certainly not be said of the campaign for radical socio-economic demands. As a rule, it was a matter of merely adopting requisite resolutions at the congresses of individual unions and the TUC, as well as including them in the Labour Party's resolutions and programme documents. The unions thereby seemed to shift responsibility for the actual implementation of the most fundamental decisions on to the TUC and Labour leadership. That considerably eased the freedom of manoeuvre for the TUC right-wing leaders and created favourable grounds for them to pursue a conciliatory policy, particularly after the Labour Party's general election success in early 1974. That government, realising the danger of confrontation with the unions, steered a course of more flexible social manoeuvring and close partnership with the union movement leadership, concluding a "social contract" with it. Its essence was to get the unions to accept (in exchange for certain government concessions) the policy of wage growth restraint. The movement required time to become convinced from its own experience of the negative effects of that type of policy.

Activity of union rank and file gained much more strength after 1977 and particularly in the winter of 1978 and 1979; the strike campaign became more acute and union pressure grew on the government over a wide range of socio-economic issues, especially on employment problems, the cost of living and promotion of social services. The left wing that had weakened somewhat between 1974 and 1976 began to grow stronger. But the list towards narrow trade unionism is far from over and opportunities remain for preserving the influence of right-wing, conciliatory leaders.

With the Tory access to power in 1979, the British unions were obliged to ward off government attacks on the workers' principal gains. They not only stepped up the strike campaign but began more widely to take part in mass political protest actions against the reactionary policy of Margaret Thatcher's cabinet. Their interaction with the labour movement's political forces, and above all with the left wing, grew, which had a swift effect on the situation within the Labour Party. The 1979 TUC Conference adopted an important resolution affirming full TUC opposition to the government's wage restrictions in any form and laid the principal foundation for mounting the union struggle.

From the autumn of 1979 the grass-roots union branches, primarily the shop-steward organisations, began to step up their activity. The Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions led by Communists and embracing union activists from the most diverse areas intensified its activity as well.

The state of affairs in the union movement of *Australia* had much in common with Britain in the period under review. In actively assisting Labour Party victory at the 1972 elections, the unions, with some 2.8 million members, or 55 per cent of the country's work force, gained the satisfaction of the major part of their demands during the initial period of Labour Party office. The Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) involving over 2 million people, as well as unions outside that organisation, can take the credit for getting the state to implement certain measures for controlling the activity of foreign companies in the country's extractive industry. Under pressure from below, primarily from the unions, the Labour government also carried through a series of reforms in the social sphere, and did away with restrictions on union activity.

After the liberal-agrarian coalition government took office in November 1975 the union movement was faced with the problem of preserving its economic and social gains. In the situation of a steadily rising cost of living, the unions firmly rebuffed any imposed agreement on freezing wages and launched a vigorous strike struggle.

The government went on to the attack against the unions: it attempted to make elections to leading union bodies subject to the control of arbitration agencies so as to make it easier for leaders to the liking of the government and employers to be elected. And in 1977 a law was passed outlawing strikes of civil servants. The ACTU President declared that the unions would respond with a determined and mass strike in the event of that act being put into practice.

The Australian trade unions, particularly the left-wing unions

with more than a million members (railway workers, steel workers, builders), fought for better terms for old-age pensioners and an improved state education system; they pressed for the tackling of urgent problems of the Aborigines and the "new Australians" (recent immigrants) and worked for strengthening international labour unity (including promoting ties with the World Federation of Trade Unions) and safeguarding peace.

The ACTU Congress held in September 1979 marked the consolidation of all left forces in the face of the reactionary policy of the liberal-agrarian coalition and of the incipient fresh economic crisis. Delegates assessed as a great event the joining of ACTU by the large progressive union of skilled blue- and white-collar workers. In the view of the Socialist Party of Australia, that marked the beginning of the process of uniting the unions and strengthening the united action of workers.¹ The point is that a feature of the Australian labour movement is the existence of a large number of unions similar in type to craft unions operating in one branch or factory (the national steamship line has 12 unions, the Qantas national airways company 22 and the communications system 27). As many as 139 union organisations were represented at the 1979 ACTU Congress. The progressive wing markedly strengthened its position within the newly elected ACTU Executive Committee. It included Pat Clancy, General Secretary of one of the country's biggest unions, the Building Workers' Industrial Union of Australia, and Chairman of the Socialist Party.

The Congress set out union objectives in the fight for higher wages, against unemployment and in defence of workers' rights. That involved above all introducing democratic planning through the establishment of committees of union representatives and factory-owners for the joint elaboration of questions concerned with production employment, etc. It also put forward the demand for expanding industrial democracy, giving workers more rights in regulating labour relations at factories. Finally, the ACTU voiced its opposition to the domination of overseas capital in the country and its support for Australian economic independence. The unions demanded the establishment of control over foreign capital, the participation in that control of their own representatives and firmer regulation of the export of capital.

Although the ACTU leadership generally continued its typically trade-unionist policy and acted, as spelt out in its official publication, only to secure the "better functioning" of the present economic system without pursuing the goal of changing it, many rank-and-file members of the unions began to question the efficacy of attaining

¹ *Socialist* (Sydney), September 25, 1979.

radical change in workers' situation while retaining the present system.¹

The changes taking place in the union movement of *Belgium* were also rather complex. The two influential union organisations, the Belgian General Labour Federation (Fédération Générale du Travail de Belgique—FGTB) and the Confederation of Christian Trade Unions (Confédération des Syndicats Chrétiens—CSC), each having approximately a million members, continued to set the pace. Under the impact of processes of leftward shift in the labour movement and the expanding range of demands in the union struggle, the trend towards converging positions of both organisations and co-ordination of their activities grew stronger. The stronger independence of both organisations, and especially weakening links of the CSC with the Social Christian Party, the main bourgeois party, have played a part.

At the same time, the FGTB's desire to establish a single union front on a firm foundation ran up against the opposition of right-wing forces inside CSC which tried to undermine the unity already attained.

Among the common demands that both main union federations put forward in the mid-70s were the establishment of a large state economic sector, an enhanced role for the unions in dealing with the issues of industrial development at national and regional levels, introduction of "public instances" for determining work regimes in factories experiencing difficulties. Together with the Communist and the Socialist parties, the unions proposed a "pre-pension regime" of employment (36-hour week without reduced wages) as part of the fight against unemployment.

The positive shifts in the unions encouraged the growth in membership and the spreading of their influence among the working class. But the union leadership remained reformist and still regarded talks with the employers and the state rather than mass movement as the principal method of attaining success. Many militant strikes arose in spite of the union leadership.

As in neighbouring Belgium, in the *Netherlands* two union centres, the Netherlands Federation of Trade Unions (NFTU) and the Catholic Trade Union Federation (CTUF), both under the influence of the Party of Labour, dominated the scene. In 1975 they formed a Federation (with 1.2 million members in 1976) whose programme noted that the social system needed radical changes and that the country had a fundamentally unjust incomes distribution. The Protestant union centre, the Christian National Federation of Trade

¹ *The ATUC: a Short History on the Occasion of the 50th Anniversary. 1927-1977*, Sydney, 1977, p. 93.

Unions (CNFTU) with 300,000 members, which often took a blatantly opportunist stance, did not enter the Federation.

An important distinguishing feature of the union movement in *West Germany* during the 70s was an upsurge in the activity of the Association of German Trade Unions (DGB), which had over 7.7 million members in 17 industrial unions. The country also had a few autonomous unions, among them the Clerical, Technical and Administrative Workers (478,000 members), the German Federation of Civil Servants and Public Officials (800,000 members) and the Association of Christian Trade Unions (220,000 members). The level of union organisation of West German workers reached 43 per cent in 1979.¹ The trade unions countered the reactionary policy of monopoly capital with a programme of socio-economic reform in workers' interests. As well as traditional tasks of improving the material position of blue- and white-collar workers it contained demands for democratic reforms involving protection from the social consequences of capitalist rationalisation, better working conditions and democratisation of education.

Under the impact of the mass movement, the right-wing leadership of DGB was forced to formulate demands intended to enhance the part played by unions and questioning certain of the principles of the existing socio-economic structure. For example, the new programme published in the spring of 1981 noted that there could be no socio-political progress without a trade union struggle,² that unions must act as a politically independent force guarding the workers' interests. The key demands of the programme were the right to work, shorter working time and a 35-hour week, and protection of workers from the consequences of the introduction of new technology. It put a special emphasis on extending the rights of hired workers in dealing with socio-economic problems at the factory level and in industry and the economy as a whole, on democratising economic management, including transferring a number of its industries to public ownership. The programme underlined the "contradiction in the interests of labour and capital" and the need to unite all the country's unions for safeguarding workers' interests.

Of late, the DGB and other unions have been a target of frenzied attacks by conservative and reactionary forces trying to blunt workers' fight, to debilitate the union movement and to split its ranks. Such a policy is meeting mounting resistance by the unions. In February and March 1980 they launched an extensive protest cam-

¹ *Statistisches Jahrbuch 1979 für die BRD*, Stuttgart und Mainz, 1979, p. 541; *Die Welt*, August 23, 1979, p. 3.

² *Nachrichten zur Wirtschafts- und Sozialpolitik*, XXI, Frankfurt on the Main, No. 4, April 1981, p. 11.

paign against lockouts and called upon all sections of the population to act in defence of vital socio-economic rights.

Forced one way or another to react to the growing popular discontent and to the new circumstances of union activity, the right-wing union leaders modified their tactics and have largely not stood in the way of (and in many cases have actually encouraged) the formulation of demands of an essentially national significance. However, they have tried, first, to prevent the putting forward of demands that question the very foundations of bourgeois society (nationalisation, workers' control, etc.) and, second, to channel the efforts for implementing more modest aims into the traditional right-wing reformist policy.

The domination of right-wingers in DGB has not allowed this largest of all West German working-class organisations to act as a mobilising force in the fight for far-reaching demands included in its programme documents under pressure from below, and has considerably weakened its position in the battle with monopoly capital. Nevertheless, the West German union movement in the latter part of the 70s displayed a turn towards a more resolute struggle in support of workers' demands. There was a clear trend towards the politicisation of demands put forward by unions. They were increasingly directed against the government policy itself as well as the consequences of that policy.

Being closely bound up with the German Social Democratic Party and sharing its major principles and premises, the DGB has in recent years been more inclined, however, to occupy a more critical position in regard to the particular political line pursued by SPD leaders and their close co-operation with big capital.

The trend towards a wider range of demands made by unions in the *Nordic countries* (Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Iceland and Finland) noticeably grew in the 70s; here the level of union organisation of the working class was much higher than in most other capitalist states. The unions had over 7 million members and covered virtually every third person. The union movement was distinguished by a centralised structure, while terms of pay and working conditions were normally regulated by collective agreement between national associations of unions and the employers.

This trait in the Scandinavian union movement became an important organisational requisite of the fact that a series of overall socio-economic issues of relations between labour and capital going beyond the bounds of the individual factory and industry have been raised and partly resolved through the mechanism of the collective agreement. These issues include, in particular, employment guarantees, social security and the levelling up of the low-paid. At the same time, union centralisation made even more important for the

rank and file to fight for union democracy, for the rights of intermediate and lower union branches, against the excessive concentration of powers, particularly on issues of holding strikes, within the central agencies of the union organisations.

The most obvious example of the high level of demands made by unions in the 70s was the stance taken by the Swedish Trade Union Confederation (over 2 million members) on several vital socio-economic problems. Swedish unions energetically opposed unrestricted rights for employers in taking on and dismissing workers and achieved a new, more favourable legislation on those issues and better social security and insurance terms. They proposed putting capital-formation and investment at monopoly enterprises under union control through deduction of part of profits for special "workers' funds".

The Norwegian Federation of Trade Unions (680,000 members) and the Federation of Danish Trade Unions (over 1.1 million members) took similar positions on those issues. Since the mid-70s the fight against unemployment that affected 10 per cent of the able-bodied part of the population has been the central task of Danish unions.

Ideologically, politically and, to a large extent, also organisationally the Scandinavian unions are closely tied to Social Democratic parties. As in Great Britain, many Swedish and Norwegian unions are collective members of the respective parties; in Denmark they support a less formal, but also allied relationship with the Social Democrats. While remaining generally within the framework of social-reformist ideology and practice, the Scandinavian unions nonetheless begin to become drawn into the struggle which frequently acquires objectively an anti-capitalist orientation.

The role of Communists has grown in all Scandinavian unions in recent years, although it is confined mainly to the bounds of grass-roots union organisations.

Left-wing forces in the Finnish trade union movement occupy much more solid and influential positions. Victory in the fight for labour unity, resulting in the formation in 1969 of the Confederation of Finnish Trade Unions (some 1 million members), established favourable conditions for the enhanced role of unions in society, for the co-operation of Communists and Social Democrats at all union levels.

During the 70s the focus of attention for Finnish trade unions was the state incomes policy which became, at the same time, the object of serious conflict within the movement. Here, too, the practice of nation-wide wage regulation set unions the task of linking the demands for higher wages to the state of the economy, which implied working out priorities in socio-economic demands. The union demands shifted from the local and industrial to national

level. That objectively signified a trend towards the politicisation of the socio-economic campaign by the unions which became increasingly aware that the vital issues of improving the workers' socio-economic status in the long run could not be resolved within the framework of labour agreements with the employers.

From the end of the 1960s there was stronger co-ordinated action in the union movement within the Nordic countries. The close union contacts formalised organisationally in the Council of Nordic Trade Unions, and the relative proximity of political platforms made it possible for unions act in concert on issues of regional integration.

Right-wing Socialists exert a decisive influence over the trade unions of *Austria* and their national centre, the Austrian Federation of Trade Unions (*Österreichischer Gewerkschaftsbund—ÖG*), with 1.64 million members in 1979. They occupy key positions in most industrial unions and in the union branches at place of work. ÖG's deeply reformist leadership, closely associated with the Socialist Party of Austria, regards its main objective to be maintaining class peace and 'social order', and it endeavours to avoid friction with the employers whenever it can.

Acting within the bounds of ÖG, the Trade Union Left Bloc—Communists, left-wing Socialists and non-party unionists—is the only group within the Austrian union movement that links the fight for improving the working class' situation with eradication of capitalism.

In recent years the Left Bloc has reinforced its influence at a number of big nationalised enterprises, in particular those like Voest, Alpine Montan and Elin. It closely links the fight for workers' economic demands with actions against re-privatisation of nationalised enterprises, the country's entry into the Common Market, the subordination of Austria to West German capital, and for the strengthening of its neutrality, for European security, disarmament and peace. The Bloc has advanced the slogan of "reviving democracy". Among the specific demands intended to facilitate that revival are introduction of a referendum on issues affecting the nation's vital interests, autonomy of regional communes, the granting of wide rights to factory councils, and the securing of trade union independence from the state.

The above-mentioned changes in the trade union movement of individual capitalist countries, despite their national discrepancies, testify to the existence of several common tendencies typical of the movement in the 60s and 70s. One of these is the almost universal growth in union membership and, in most states, the higher degree of labour organisation. On the whole, in 18 capitalist countries alone, union membership grew by 15 million (from 69 million to 84 million) between 1965 and 1975, while the average share of

those organised in unions in 17 countries (excluding the USA) rose from 40 to 42 per cent. Only in the USA did the percentage of organisation diminish.

The union growth is all the more remarkable in that the period under review witnessed the deepest economic crisis for several decades, causing huge unemployment, and prior to it several large falls in production. In the past crises and unemployment had straightaway caused a decline in union membership. During the 70s that type of rigid connection was broken. In fact, union membership increased almost everywhere.

To a large extent the spreading of union influence to white-collar workers, including technical workers and engineers, remains an unresolved problem. During the 50s the unions of clerical workers, technicians and especially engineers were relatively small. In the 60s they began to grow fast. In Britain, for example, the growth of industrial unions and the influx of white-collar workers became major factors of the overall increased share of organised workers within the labour force. The situation in several other countries was similar. While in 1974 the USA had 5.9 million white-collar workers in unions and "professional associations", in 1978 there were already 6.9 million.¹ Nevertheless, in all capitalist countries (except, possibly, Japan), white-collar workers, including the rank-and-file, were on the whole worse organised than manual workers. In the USA, for example, the percentage of white-collar workers in unions at the end of the 60s was 2.5 to 3 times lower than the percentage of manual workers.

As organisation of white-collar workers grew, the question of their union relationships with the traditional unions of largely manual workers acquired increasing importance. It is possible to single out three basic models of those relations—the American, the Swedish and the British. The distinguishing features of the first are weak involvement of white-collar workers in unions and the lack of any substantial influence of their organisations on the policy of the main national union federation (or federations). That is roughly the situation in the USA and in Canada. There, the trade union leadership tends to be indifferent to the specific needs of white collars, which hampers their unionisation and the involvement of their associations in the mainstream of the movement.

Typical of the Swedish model is the high degree of union organisation of white collars and the existence of individual white-collar unions outside the framework of the main national union federation embracing predominantly manual workers. Such a situation is also typical of Norway, Switzerland, Australia, New Zealand and, partly, West Germany and France.

¹ *AFL-CIO News*, September 17, 1977; September 8, 1979.

Typical features of the British model are quite considerable organisation of white-collar workers, the integration of their major unions in the single union federation and the very substantial role they play within it. Apart from Great Britain, that integration exists in Austria, and partly in Denmark. In Japan, West Germany, France and Italy quite a large part of white-collar unions are also affiliated to union federations together with manual workers' unions. In West Germany, for example, the DGB in the mid-70s embraced over 1.5 million white-collar workers—treble the number in the autonomous Clerical, Technical and Administrative Workers. The number of civil servants in DGB in 1978 exceeded the number of members of the autonomous Federation of Civil Servants and Public Officials and amounted to 832,000.¹

The overall trend, however, is for a gradual convergence between the trade unions of manual and white-collar workers and, even where the latter exist in isolation, their contacts with the major union organisations are underway and expanding.

White-collar workers in the Japanese union movement play a very vigorous role. Organisations with a predominance of white-collar workers may be included in them, since formally each union covers people of all trades and professions employed at a given enterprise.

In Japan trade unions of public and municipal employees, teachers, postal, telegraph and telephone workers are the most organised and militant in the union movement. While in 1979 some 30 per cent of that category of employees were covered on the average in all economic sectors, the union coverage of public employees and municipal workers was as high as 73.1 per cent, and it was 60.8 per cent for employees in finance, insurance and real estate management.² Over many years the Japanese trade union movement has been conducting a battle to gain the right to strike and collective bargaining for these sections of workers.

Most white-collar unions in capitalist states are less bound up with the political parties of the working class than manual workers' unions, and the ideology of political neutrality is generally predominant in them. At the same time many white-collar organisations are now quite active in the socio-economic and party-political struggle along with the main mass of trade unionists. That is particularly typical of several unions in countries where the British model of relations between white-collar workers and the labour movement has formed.

Although a section of white-collar unions often counterpose their own narrow, corporative interests to those of the labour and demo-

¹ *Statistisches Jahrbuch 1979 für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, Stuttgart und Mainz, 1979, p. 549.

² *Japan Labor Bulletin*, April 1980, p. 5.

cratic movement, and cultivate guild isolationism, on the whole the process of unionisation of white-collar workers marks a big step forward in promoting the union movement in capitalist countries and in consolidating its influence and political role.

With the swift growth in numbers of immigrant workers in the advanced capitalist states in the 60s and 70s, the question of their unionisation and the attitude of the union movement towards them became urgent.

In most West European countries, participation of immigrant workers in the union movement is low. It depends greatly on the general level of organisation in the country and in particular industries and also to some extent on the number of foreign workers in various industries. In France, for example, only 10 per cent of foreign workers in the 70s were in unions that involved 23 per cent of all workers; in West Germany, where the overall level of organisation was higher, the figures were 30 and 35 per cent respectively; and in the Netherlands—35 and 40 per cent. In some industries great differences exist in foreign worker union involvement. In West Germany in 1975 more than half (52.7 per cent) of foreign workers employed in the metal-working industry were members of the major IG Metall union; in Switzerland a third of foreign workers in building and woodworking were members of the Building and Woodworkers' Union, yet less than 13 per cent were members of the Metalworkers' and Watchmakers' Union.¹ These examples, however, are more an exception than the rule, since many foreign workers are engaged in those industries and at those enterprises where the level of union organisation in all West European countries is extremely low—textiles, building, and so on.

Unstable employment, a certain isolation of foreign workers from local people and a chauvinistic policy and propaganda by reactionary groups hamper the extension of union membership among immigrant workers. In addition, they have the real fear of being the first to be fired if they begin to take an active part in the union fight for a higher standard of living and the same social and political rights as local workers.

By contrast with the unions that take a class position and try to involve foreign workers in the common struggle of the working class against the bourgeoisie, some reformist union centres hinder their involvement. In particular, Force Ouvrière and the French Confederation of Christian Workers believe that the participation of immigrant workers in all forms of class struggle is out of the question, since immigrant workers, as foreigners, they maintain, should keep a low profile.

¹ *International Labour Review*, Vol. 117, No. 1, 1978, p. 22.

Economic hardships and the growth of nationalist sentiments were reflected also in the policy of several West European unions. Expressing the fears of some local workers, who see immigrants as competitors on the labour market, some unions oppose the further importation of foreign labour.

Unions that take a class struggle position oppose national discrimination and work not only to have it outlawed legally but also to punish severely all those who in one way or another endeavour to put it into practice. The Charter "For an Immigration Policy Conforming to the Interests of French Workers and Immigrants" adopted by the 4th National Conference of the CGT in 1976 called for dispersing groups engaged in racist propaganda, banning all publications that in any way encourage hatred of foreigners, and prosecuting their authors.¹ The joint programme of demands by the CGT and the CFDT also calls for the banning and strict punishment of all actions imbued with a spirit of racism and xenophobia. Both these union organisations took a decision in 1974 to step up the joint struggle for the rights of immigrants, and particularly for an end to the constant racist campaigns.

The British TUC also came out against legislated racial discrimination. In a resolution unanimously passed at its annual congress in 1973 the TUC demanded the revoking of the racist Immigration Act of 1971.²

Unions affiliated to the CGT called for securing guarantees of full equality for foreign and local workers in the area of political and union rights and liberties. For example, the above-mentioned CGT Charter stated that, as well as respecting the rights of foreign workers to enter a union at their own choice, they must be guaranteed the right to strike, to lead union organisations and represent them at the enterprise and in other organisations without restrictions, and, meanwhile, employers were to be put in a situation where they could not prevent immigrants from enjoying those rights.³

Italian trade unions, after a broad discussion in local organisations, proposed working out an international statute on immigrant rights. The draft statute, approved by representatives of various Italian immigrant organisations in Western Europe, was then submitted as a petition to the European Parliament.

The Conference of Christian Trade Unions in Belgium adopted a statute for foreign workers drawn up in 1975 by immigrant activists in the union movement with workers of many nationalities in various areas of the country contributing. At the same time the unions proposed that a standard agreement on terms of employment should

¹ *Le Peuple*, No. 991, June 1-15, 1976, p. 16.

² *Report of 105th Annual Trades Union Congress*, London, 1973, p. 627.

³ *Labor*, No. 6, June 1975, p. 9.

be worked out for the countries involved in migration. In relation to this standard, bilateral agreements on migration problems would act as specifying it, rather than introducing differentiation or discrimination or creating and legitimising different rights for workers of different countries and nationalities.

Thus, unions that take a class struggle stand counterpose to the splitting activity of monopoly capital a vigorous policy aimed at bringing home to local and foreign workers the community of their interests, and at drawing foreign workers into the mainstream of the class struggle.

The shift to the left, the advancement of fresh demands, the growth of unitary tendencies and the extension of the social base are all processes that from the late 60s have embraced unions in practically all capitalist countries, though to a very different extent.

Changes in the structure of trade unions and the enhanced role of grass-roots union activists have been a very important facet of those processes. Naturally, to the greatest extent those changes affected unions where the turn to the left was most appreciable.

A complete renewal of bodies representing workers at factories and in the union locals took place, for example, in *Italy*. The former internal committees, ineffective and with limited powers, were replaced by workshop delegates who formed a factory council. An offspring of the 1968-1972 strikes, these new bodies firmly came out against an employer's unequivocal power at the workplace. They are democratic and unitary and, by contrast with the internal committees which were elected by separate ballot tickets for different unions (and were comprised of their representatives in proportion to the number of votes backing them), all workers at a given workshop or section whatever their union affiliation, including non-union members, take part in electing delegates. At any time delegates may be recalled from the factory council on the decision of their organisations.

All that ensured the institution of shop-floor delegates an unprecedentedly wide support among the workers and in turn enabled them effectively to carry out the ideas of democratic control in each particular cell of the production system.

The overall number of delegates within the 8,000 councils in Italy had already exceeded 83,000 at the start of the 70s; one delegate represented 27 workers.¹ According to survey data obtained by the employers' association, Confindustria, the councils existed at a third of enterprises, and 90 per cent of delegates were union members, 80 per cent of them union activists.²

¹ *Rassegna sindacale*, Quaderni, No. 37, 1972, p. 57.

² *La documentation française* "Notes et Etudes Documentaires", Nos. 4068-4069, March 15, 1974, pp. 43, 45.

With the emergence of the delegates and the factory councils, the situation at Italian factories and mills changed strikingly. No less important was the transformation they caused within the labour movement itself. By a decision of the General Italian Confederation of Labour, the Italian Confederation of Trade Unions and the Italian Labour Union adopted in 1971, the factory councils became a single cell of combined unions at factories and offices. All the rights and powers of union sections were transferred to them and the sections were therefore disbanded. That was how unity of workers at workplace level came about in practice.

The trade unions and factory councils rely mainly on extension of the system of collective agreement relations, on inclusion in the collective agreements of questions hitherto within the exclusive competence of the employers and administration (of taking on and firing workers, discipline, the pace and organisation of work, etc.). In many cases they have begun to contend for the right of the employer alone to determine the size, structure and direction of investments.

The union struggle at factory level developed much the same way in *France*. For decades employers had stubbornly refused to grant unions the opportunity of acting freely at the factory: of having their own offices, holding meetings, openly distributing union publications, etc. Only powerful strike actions in May and June 1968 broke their resistance. By the law of December 31, 1968 on union rights at factories, trade union activists gained the necessary guarantees protecting them from employers' arbitrary action, while the union sections gained new, favourable conditions for their activity.

While in 1969 only 22 per cent of factories had union sections, in 1973 as many as 40 per cent did so. In just 1973 they were set up at more than 2,000 big plants, mainly in the metal-working and chemical industry. In the same year, 42.67 per cent of the total number of 13,969 sections belonged to the CGT, 25.26 per cent to the CFDT, 10.84 per cent to Force Ouvrière, and 10.19 per cent to the Confédération Général des Cadres.¹

The number of sections at medium-size factories with between 50 and 149 hired workers grew particularly quickly: as of July 1, 1976, they numbered 30,170.²

Several other capitalist countries witnessed an upsurge and radicalisation at the grass-roots levels of trade union organisations in the 60s and 70s.

In *Great Britain*, the activity of shop-stewards acquired some

¹ *Le Monde*, November 6, 1973, p. 39.

² *Les Echos*, September 7, 1977.

new and important traits. Their number increased, they were elected not only by manual workers in many industries but also by office workers—in design offices, schools, local government, etc. Shop-stewards committees and associations sprang up within big monopolies and some industries. A big shift took place in the relations between the shop-stewards and the official trade union structure and its hierarchy, with the trade union leadership in many cases reconciling itself to the existence of those organisations and beginning to co-operate with them. The leaders of the two biggest unions in the country have endeavoured to draw the shop stewards into charting union policy.

The activity of shop-stewards directly and organically bound up with the mass of blue- and white-collar workers on the factory floor and relying on their support, considerably restricts the despotism of bosses on such issues as redundancies, changing the work loads, the pace and organisation of production, etc. At times they have gone even further, organising the occupation of factories or putting forward alternative plans of output development, including along the lines of transferring it from military to peaceful purposes (for example, that was how the shop-stewards committee acted at Lucas Aircraft).

The process of reinforcing the role of unions at factories and the setting up of union committees directly at workplaces in a whole range of capitalist countries is of immense importance. It is hardly surprising that employers have seen in it a threat to establish a workers' control system. Ever newer aspects of managerial power come within the purview of the union, the collective agreement relations and the strike struggle: the lists of personnel for workshops, teams, etc., the procedure for introducing new equipment, establishment and revision of work loads, etc. If we add that the influence of the grass-roots union group on all these aspects of everyday work relations is backed up by the right won (or reaffirmed) in many instances to call a general meeting of workers in the workshop in working time, it is clear that the springboard for workers' offensive action at the factory has broadened considerably.

In relying on the workers' greatly increased activity at the grass-roots level and the mounting power of the mass movement, the trade unions acquired a much more real chance than previously, to affect, along with other democratic forces, government decision-making. In a number of cases (for example, during the "hot autumn" of 1969 in Italy and in 1974 in Britain), they managed to get laws passed which workers' representatives in parliament had not succeeded in carrying through for decades, and sometimes even in areas not directly within union competence.

The mounting activity of unions on a national level required a

certain restructuring within them, primarily a substantial reinforcement of the central apparatus of major union federations. For the purposes of enhancing the competence of that apparatus in a markedly wider range of socio-economic problems with which the unions now had to deal, skilled experts were involved in it more and more and its links with scholars and scientists strengthened.

As already mentioned, the growing political role of the trade unions, the broadening range of their demands and their rising to the level of direct relations with the state authorities create more and more favourable terms for resolving both current and more cardinal tasks of the labour movement, enhancing the union role in campaigning for vital social changes and encouraging consolidation of all anti-monopoly forces.

Such results are, however, by no means forthcoming always and everywhere.

Above all in a situation where the union movement is not politically mature enough, a very real danger exists for syndicalist tendencies to come to life—i.e. tendencies to turn the trade unions into some sort of self-sufficient power claiming to resolve just about all socio-economic and political tasks confronting the working class.

In those instances when unions take on the function of the sole partner of the government in talks on important issues of socio-economic policy, that diminishes the part played by the political parties of the working class and, ultimately, also the overall effect of labour influence on state power. If the mass movement for reforms is not co-ordinated with the activity of the proletariat's political party with its vision of long-term goals, union activity sooner or later will be confined to narrow trade unionism and create the threat of isolation of the most battle-ready contingents of the working class, with the resulting shift of the axis of socio-political affairs to the right.

That kind of threat did arise, for example, in Italy at the start of the 70s—partly as a result of the gap that appeared for a time between the organised working class and the whole mass of the public. The slogans of reform advanced by workers in northern Italy during the "hot autumn" of 1969 did not take enough account of the interests of the jobless in the south, or of the intermediate sections of the population.¹

Leading unionists in the French Democratic Confederation of Labour frequently acted from a syndicalist position when refusing proposals on close co-operation with working-class political parties

¹ See the materials of the Thirteenth Congress of the Italian Communist Party and other Party Central Committee documents.

and at the same time affirming that it is the trade unions that should take upon themselves "essential responsibilities in social transformation".¹ Such views are not unknown among the practitioners and theoreticians of the union movement in several other countries.

Ultra-left figures and ideologists, discouraged by failed attempts to wrest influence in the party-political sphere and attempting to realise their ambitions through "non-party" unionism, often act as militant syndicalists these days. And a number of union leaders and activists not infrequently incline towards a mood of apolitical syndicalism. For the most part that occurs either under the impression of immediate campaign successes or as a result of an instinctive reaction to the collaborationist stance of right-wing social democratic leaders.

These syndicalist tendencies are a distorted manifestation of the tendencies towards greater union autonomy and political independence. In principle, the growth of union autonomy and stronger links with working-class parties are two sides of a single process of convergence of the economic and political forms of working-class struggle under state-monopoly capitalism. And there can be no doubt that the specific forms of relations between trade unions and working-class political parties are bound to be transformed in the new situation.

The livening up of syndicalist views in the trade union movement is not the only cost of the new stage of the movement that it entered in the latter part of the 60s.

Another, no less serious danger that awaits unions on the way to extending their political functions and establishment of direct relations with the state power, is bound up with the fact that it is in this area that the main efforts of bourgeois and right-wing reformist politicians aimed at integrating the union movement into state-monopoly capitalism have recently been focused. Their main stake has been on diverting the unions and their leadership into loyal co-operation with governments and monopolies. As payment for that co-operation they use not only and often not so much the various concessions that the ruling classes make, but also the participation by the top union leadership in the process of decision-making on vital socio-economic issues.

Such tactics probably found their purest embodiment in the Social Contract unofficially concluded in the mid-70s between the British Labour government and the TUC. A major condition contained in the Contract agreements of 1975 and 1976 was the union acceptance of a curb on nominal wage rises that actually meant a re-

¹ See E. Maire, *Pour un socialisme démocratique. Contribution de la C.F.D.T.*, Paris, 1971, p. 75.

duction in real incomes. It was certainly not surprising that in 1978, owing to sharply mounting resistance by wide sections of workers, the Social Contract was not renewed. Despite that, the consultation system between the government and the TUC leaders was preserved, and the policy of attaining maximum accord in working out socio-economic strategy from both sides continued right up to the downfall of the Labour Party at the 1979 polls.

The process moved in more or less the same direction in the USA. Here throughout the 70s the government, whether Democrat or Republican, was constantly trying to persuade the unions to hammer out anti-inflationary programmes whose cornerstone was holding down wages. The collaborationist trade union leadership was ready to make such deals. But the brazenness of the partner's—i.e. the administration's—position, coupled with the militancy of unionists, prevented the leaders from doing so and made bargaining more strained. It was in such circumstances, that union leaders were forced to turn down co-operation with the Nixon administration in pursuing its programme of economic stabilisation. For the same reason later on Carter's first anti-inflation plan was nipped in the bud, and it was only after many months of hard bargaining that the National Agreement was signed in autumn 1979 between the administration and union leadership, envisaging an enhanced role of union leadership in the administration's measures to fight inflation and its participation in a joint consultative body—the Council on Wages. It soon became clear, however, that it was the Carter administration that had mainly won from this act by making the unions share the responsibility for its unpopular anti-inflation programme.

The numerous bilateral committees of unions and employers on labour relations serve the same integrational objectives. They have come into being at various levels—national, industrial and factory; and they are meant to demonstrate a common interest of labour and capital in the "prosperity" of the national economy and industry.

In West Germany the main link in the chain of union participation in drawing up a socio-political policy has been "concerted action"—a system of regular summit consultations between the government, employers' associations and trade unions. In 1977 the DGB halted its participation in "concerted action" as a protest against attempts by employers' organisations to prevent implementation of the Act on worker participation in running factories. But in 1979 the tripartite meetings were renewed, albeit the name "concerted action" was no longer applied. In Austria this kind of union participation is effected through such bodies as a joint committee for controlling prices and wages, consisting of representa-

tives of employers' organisations, trade unions and the government, and the council on economic and social issues existing within it. In recent years the role of informal contacts between representatives of government, the big political parties, on the one hand, and the unions, on the other, has also increased in these countries, as practically everywhere in the West.

The formalised system of union political participation in the form in which it exists in capitalist countries is exceedingly undemocratic. Typically, it lacks almost completely any publicity and puts the unions at a disadvantage in terms of relationships in decision-making. Representatives are appointed from the union hierarchies and are actually unaccountable to those whom they are supposed to represent. As a result, trade union leaders, on the one hand, are able to act virtually without casting a glance towards the union grass roots, and, on the other, come under a very strong influence of the ruling classes.

In a number of cases, as has happened in Sweden, Norway and Denmark, talks with the unions on a national level have been formally held only by national associations of employers. As for direct relations between the unions and the state power, whose weight and saliency over recent decades have substantially risen, they are largely conducted on an informal basis.

However, even the system of collective bargaining on a national level, common in the Scandinavian countries, by no means insulates governmental circles and big capital from shocks. While holding in check for the moment any manifestation of individual conflict, the centralised collective agreement system simultaneously helps to shift social and political tension to a higher, national plane.

It was that concentrated expression of mounting discontent by unions with the policy of the employers (mainly in the area of wages) at the centralised talks in 1973 that gave rise to the first post-war Danish national strike following the breakdown of the negotiations. A huge labour dispute, also bound up with differences of opinion between the national union federation and the employers' association over the centralised re-signing of collective agreements, exploded in Sweden in May 1980. The Norwegian union movement also saw a number of mass actions. One vivid example was the oil strike in the summer of 1980 that paralysed practically the whole extraction of oil and gas on the continental shelf. Those unprecedented events demonstrated major qualitative changes underway in the labour movement of once "tranquil" Scandinavia.

The very divergent historical experience and historical traditions of the trade union movement in different countries, just like the dissimilar depth of left-wing shifts commencing within them, have

produced a multiplicity of forms in which their mounting political role in society and the state has begun to manifest itself.

What is common to all countries, however, is that the bourgeoisie and the bourgeois state, forced to take account of the growing political influence of the unions and the mounting impact of the membership on their leadership, are no longer capable of elaborating and pursuing a socio-economic policy that ignores the demands and positions of the unions.

The same factors go a long way also to explaining the wider popularity of drafts for participation by workers and their organisations in production management on both a factory level and at the level of corporations and whole industries (especially if the industries are nationalised). During the 50s and 60s those drafts were popular only in a few countries, while the "worker manager" system was partly introduced only in West Germany; but from the late 60s such ideas were being considered almost everywhere. The ruling class felt the need to neutralise mounting discontent among the working class over its alienation from the main levers of economic policy both in the factory and on a national scale. It tried to prevent the advancement and implementation of the radical demands of worker and democratic control. The governments of several countries studied various variants and systems of joint participation of workers in management, and in some of them special bills were prepared and adopted.¹ Within the framework of the EEC for many years work has been underway on a unified system of such joint participation.

That does not mean at all, however, that such methods have been more effective, reliable or cheap. Despite the comparatively short time the new methods were in use, it became clear that their further implementation was bound up with considerable political risk. In the first place, both within unions and within the labour movement as a whole in a number of countries there was a markedly growing opposition to those forms of joint participation that, despite the unions taking on certain pledges, gives them nothing or almost nothing in return. That opposition is more often than not aimed not simply at getting rid of the existing forms of "participation", but at their replacement by those that would lead to the genuine incursion of unions into the centres of economic and political power of bourgeois society (largely through extending the sphere of collective agreement relations at the level of a factory, industry and the economy as a whole) that would enable them to exert a direct and effective influence on the policy of the ruling circles and would not hamper mass action.

¹ See, for example, *Employee Participation and Company Reform*, Paris, 1976.

Thus, by introducing elements of joint participation into management, ruling circles at the same time inadvertently concentrate the attention of workers and their organisations on questions of power and management. Insofar as the powers-that-be do not wish thereby and indeed cannot meet popular requirements for genuine participation, they *volens nolens* help to exacerbate the struggle around those issues. The fact that the unions come to the forefront of the fight against the policy of the monopolies and the bourgeois state reflects the trend towards the enhanced role of the unions in present-day bourgeois society. The objective development is towards a situation where the unions more and more frequently stand opposed to state-monopoly capitalism as a force accumulating the social protest of millions of workers. Of course, the acuteness of the clashes between the unions and the ruling class depends on many things, but that is precisely the way things are going.

The fight by popular masses was forcing leaders of the reformist unions to shift their ground, particularly retreating from unconditional backing for the aggressive policy of imperialism. The late 60s and early 70s marked a rise in the trade union battle in defence of the Vietnamese people. Numerous demonstrations and protest rallies, material aid and support were a vivid expression of workers' international solidarity. In France, for example, days and weeks of actions were organised under CGT guidance in defence of the people of Vietnam. In Australia, left-wing forces in the unions launched a mass movement to halt the aggressive war and to withdraw all Australian troops from Vietnam. In Britain, trade unions held a series of national conferences for the freedom and independence of Vietnam, resolutely demanding an end to US aggression and the withdrawal of all US forces from South-East Asia. Large demonstrations in support and defence of the heroic people of Vietnam and against the reactionary foreign policy of US imperialism took place in Italy, Sweden and elsewhere.

In Japan, the Communist and Socialist parties, SOHYO and CHURITSU ROREN for many years opposed US aggression in Indochina; they came out against the aggressive Japanese-US security pact, called for the dismantling of US bases in Okinawa and opposed the entry of US atomic submarines into Japanese ports.

In the United States itself the mass anti-war movement in which the working class was to the fore gained in strength. Despite support for government aggressive policy by the AFL-CIO reactionary leadership, forces grew within the labour movement that were resolutely opposed to aggression in Indochina. On October 13, 1971, wide sections of union membership took part in the day of protest against the war, racial discrimination and the government's anti-worker policy. At the end of 1972 the Labour for Peace movement gained

strength, roundly opposing the pro-imperialist policy of the AFL-CIO leadership.

In the situation of protracted inflation, economic decline, unemployment and the Carter administration's policy of cutting back on social needs, the rise in military expenditure and curbs on trade with socialist states particularly upset union rank and file. A number of unions (mainly those favouring "liberalisation"—the auto workers, mechanics, telecommunication workers, garment-makers, textile workers, state, county and municipal employees, etc.), spurred on by these moods, spoke out for restricting the arms race, further progress in detente and contacts with socialist countries on both a state and trade union level. It was the growth in such a mood that obliged the AFL-CIO Executive Committee in the summer of 1979 to favour the SALT-2 agreement, causing confusion in the hawks' camp.

The Canadian trade unions came up with important initiatives in the campaign for peace and disarmament, and also on the problem of creating new jobs. The Convention of the Ontario Labour Federation held in 1979, for example, spoke out for ratification of the SALT-2 agreement and, on behalf of the LFO and its branches called on all governments to follow the course towards halting the arms race. The convention demanded that the federal government work out a strategy of full employment through promoting the manufacturing industry, constructing oil and gas pipelines from east to west and setting up a shipbuilding industry to develop the ocean-going merchant fleet; all of that, in the opinion of the convention, would have to be financed out of a 50 per cent cut in the country's military budget.

The issues of European security, restraining the arms race and the situation in the Middle East became paramount in international politics and were increasingly drawing the attention of trade unions in capitalist states in the latter part of the 70s.

West European and Japanese trade unions were particularly active on all those issues. They had rich experience of anti-war actions and were seriously worried by attempts of the US administration and influential politicians in their own countries to rehabilitate the spectre of the cold war, to begin a new spiral in the arms race and to "bury" detente. A number of influential union federations in Italy, France, Great Britain and elsewhere came out unequivocally against plans to deploy US Cruise missiles in Western Europe and stepped up their fight against augmented military allocations by the governments of their own countries.

Opposition to the dangerous actions of advocates of the cold war and arms race also began noticeably to increase in North America at the end of the 70s and start of the 80s.

The role of the unions also increased in defence of democracy. Thus, in West Germany at the end of the 60s the unions firmly advocated a ban on the neofascist National Democratic Party and opposed adoption of "emergency legislation" substantially curtailing democratic rights. In France, progressive unions throughout the 60s and 70s fought for democracy, advocating a wide range of social and democratic liberties, real participation in managing state affairs and determining the direction of national affairs. In Italy, the unions were demanding comprehensive democratic reforms and were repelling the assaults by reaction upon popular gains. In Japan, the unions energetically fought against attempts by reaction to revoke progressive clauses in the Constitution that curb the growth of militarism, and also against attempts by the ruling quarters to push through an anti-democratic reform of the country's existing electoral system.

The overall rising role of unions in socio-political affairs which brought them to face new and complex tasks, and the convergence of national union federations stimulated international co-ordination of union activity and promoted contacts between international union organisations.

Indeed, in the late 60s and early 70s certain moves were made in that direction. Undoubtedly, conditions for that were also favourable due to the workers' socio-economic struggle spreading beyond national boundaries and their more vigorous actions against monopoly capital internationally organised. The objective processes of internationalisation of productive forces of capitalism and the rapid growth and strengthening of the international monopolies, to a large extent accelerated by the scientific and technological revolution, all entailed problems which, if they were to be tackled, required the working class and its mass organisations to put an end to trade union split.

The unity issue was particularly acute for the workers and unions in EEC countries, where economic integration had acquired considerable scope and had led to the appearance of a powerful supranational state-monopoly alliance. The international front of monopoly capital, under whose control were the main Common Market decision-making centres, stood in stark contrast to the scattered actions of the national sections of the European working class. The lack of unity in the union movement of EEC countries gave considerable advantages to the ruling class, enhanced the ability to manoeuvre of international monopolies in their assault on the workers' gains. In that situation the reformist unions were forced to make certain adjustments to their policy. From the mid-60s a critical approach to EEC policy began to grow in the reformist union organisations of Western Europe. An urge to stand up to "Europe of the monopo-

lies" stimulated a trend towards international consolidation of the working people.

The process of mounting union unity was considerably hampered by the persisting tension in international relations of the 60s. Detente and the very struggle for detente were a powerful catalyst of unitary tendencies. From the early 70s, unions of various trends, including those belonging to the international reformist organisations—the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and the World Confederation of Labour (WCL)—were more and more actively entering the mounting campaign for detente. In opposing the policy of wars and aggression, in advocating the holding of a European Conference on Security and Co-operation unions of reformist bent were increasingly demonstrating a sensible approach to the issues of peaceful coexistence.

Promotion of relations between Soviet trade unions and the largest ICFTU-affiliated trade unions in capitalist countries, like the Association of German Trade Unions, the Belgian General Federation of Labour, the union federations of Austria, Sweden, Norway and elsewhere all contributed in no small way to improving the climate in the international union movement. Agreement on promoting co-operation between the British TUC and the Soviet Central Trade Union Council and exchanges of delegates between them were of particular salience.

The positive shifts internationally more and more clearly revealed the lack of conformity between the isolationist, anti-communist policy of the right-wing leaders of ICFTU and WCL, on the one hand, and the growing move towards cohesion in the international union movement exhibited by their member unions. The strengthening within unions in some capitalist states of left-wingers advocating renunciation of the class collaboration policy, healing the split and joint struggle by unions of different trends against the multinationals had a strong effect on the policy of the international reformist union centres.

New traits appeared in the activity of the Christian unions. Having shed outmoded dogmas of Christian syndicalism, many organisations that were members of the World Confederation of Labour (up to 1969 known as the International Confederation of Christian Trade Unions) were taking an anti-capitalist stance on a series of paramount issues. While remaining generally supporters of class collaboration and emphasising their hostile attitude to the "promotion of class antagonisms", the WCL meanwhile admitted in its Guidance Document of 1968 that class struggle was a reality and that it was induced by the capitalist system. At its 18th Congress in 1973 it spoke out for replacing capitalism by a new, democratic society based on socialisation of the principal means of production.

Within the bounds of the overall changes taking place in the WCL, its relations with the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) also evolved. The initial attempts to depart from the policy of a priori and categorical refusal to have anything to do with progressive unions found expression in a special report presented for consideration at the 17th WCL Congress in 1969. The next year the 34th WCL Council Session adopted a resolution on the establishment of relations with the WFTU.

The constant co-operation between the WCL and WFTU that began in 1971 marked the defeat of the many years of attempts by reactionaries to isolate the WFTU internationally.

The leftward process also affected the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, the most influential reformist organisation within the union movement and the second biggest international union centre after the WFTU. According to 1975 figures, the ICFTU had 119 member organisations in 88 countries with a total membership of some 52 million. Set up in 1949 as a result of the split in the World Federation of Trade Unions forced by right-wing unions leaders from the USA, Great Britain and some other countries, the ICFTU passed through several stages in its development. During the cold war of the late 40s and 50s, its leaders took a blatantly pro-imperialist position on international issues. The strong pressure from AFL-CIO, the biggest and most influential member of the Confederation, and the rightward shift of the ideological views of leaders of West European reformist unions set the tone for ICFTU's overall policy at this time. In backing the policy of the imperialist powers, the Confederation openly oriented itself on isolating progressive forces within the international labour movement. At the end of 1955 the ICFTU Executive took a decision categorically to ban any contacts by its member unions with the union organisations of socialist states and other WFTU organisations.

From the early 60s ICFTU activity showed definite changes. At the 8th Congress in 1965, for the first time since the ICFTU's inception, members of the British TUC and some other West European union organisations openly opposed the American diktat and spoke out for a more realistic foreign policy in step with the times. Despite the opposition of right-wing leaders, many national union organisations affiliated to the Confederation began to extend contacts with trade unions in socialist states.

The weakening position of the right wing in the ICFTU, that became particularly marked after the AFL-CIO withdrawal in February 1969 helped to bring about more flexibility in relations between the Confederation and unions in the WFTU. One reason behind the withdrawal was worsening relations between the AFL-CIO

leaders and ICFTU over issues concerning the policy of detente and co-operation with socialist nations. Official ICFTU documents henceforth displayed less rampant anti-communism. There were virtually no direct attacks on the WFTU at the 10th (1972) and the 11th (1975) ICFTU congresses.

A reflection of the new tendencies in ICFTU policy was the adoption by the Executive in 1967 of a decision to set up a committee to study the question of contacts with unions in socialist countries. In 1970 the committee's recommendation was followed up and the ban was revoked on member organisations having relations with "communist-controlled trade unions". In 1973, for the first time for many years, the ICFTU Executive officially recognised the right of its member organisations to maintain contacts with unions of socialist countries. Each ICFTU national union federation could now independently take decisions on contacts with WFTU member organisations. True, there was the proviso that multilateral relations between the two international organisations could only take place within the framework of the International Labour Office.¹

A step forward in promoting co-operation was the formation in February 1973 of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC). Set up in the face of opposition from right-wing leaders of the ICFTU and the AFL-CIO who feared a weakening in their influence over the European and world trade union movement, the Confederation, as its first Chairman Vic Feather stated in a press interview, rejected the principle of ideological or religious parochialism. The ETUC Charter declared that it was an independent body open to "democratic trade union confederations".² Reflecting the view of the majority of delegates at the Constituent Congress held in Brussels in February 1973, Vic Feather emphasised that there was a real chance of unions not affiliated with the ICFTU joining the European Confederation.³

The rapid growth in ETUC membership showed the desire for unity among the West European movement. Initially, 18 national union organisations in Western Europe (28 million members) voiced their desire to join the Confederation.⁴ In the summer of 1974 it already had some 38 million members. The First ETUC Congress that took place in Copenhagen in May 1974 ratified the decision of the Executive on admitting the union centres of Denmark, Ireland, Finland, Malta and 8 European union organisations of the World Confederation of Labour. After the major European member unions

¹ *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, No. 3, 1976, pp. 254, 255.

² *Ibid.*, p. 263.

³ *Morning Star*, February 6-7, 1973.

⁴ *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, No. 3, 1976, p. 266.

of the ICFTU announced their affiliation to ETUC, the WCL European organisation was disbanded. In July 1974 the ETUC was joined by the General Italian Confederation of Labour. As a result, not only did its membership sharply rise, but fundamental changes took place in its nature. The ETUC was becoming a regional organisation of a new type embracing West European unions of all orientations.

True, its political strategy was not distinguished by very great consistency. Declarations of dedication to the ideals of a "free trade union movement" (in other words, social-reformism), as well as the Charter clause that envisaged reciprocal representation of the general secretaries of ETUC and ICFTU in the leading bodies of both of them, testified that both ideologically and organisationally the ETUC was unable fully to overcome dependence upon the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. It is indicative that, despite extension of membership, the ETUC leading agencies were formed mainly from members of the reformist union organisations that were part of ICFTU.

Orientation of ETUC leaders on the ICFTU political line left a profound mark on its strategy and the principal directions of its activity, making it difficult to turn the ETUC into a broad and genuinely unitary association of all European trade unions. The limitations on ETUC policy are evident, in particular, in that right to the present day it rejects the application of the class organisation of French workers, the CGT, to affiliate to the ETUC. As before it is unclear whether the unions of the European socialist countries can join the Confederation. On the whole the ETUC has still not done any work on a level necessary in present conditions. But the co-operation of ICFTU unions with progressive unions that is beginning within the ETUC framework is having a positive effect on the overall climate of the European and international trade union movement. ETUC congresses that took place in London in April 1976 and in Munich in May 1979 paid serious attention to issues of international co-operation among West European unions in the fight against unemployment and inflation, for better working conditions, for women's equal rights at work, for control over the new industrial technology. The mounting need for international co-ordination of union activity was particularly stressed by those two congresses in view of the vital task for the working class to consolidate its opposition to the policy of the transnationals and to fight that policy with co-ordination and concerted action by workers in different countries on company and industry level.

A leading part in strengthening labour unity belongs to the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) which has firmly and consistently fought to unite the whole of the international working class.

Convincing proof of that was the 8th World Trade Union Congress held in 1973; its participants represented 200 million workers from socialist, capitalist and developing countries. The Document on Policy and Action adopted at the Congress stressed that WFTU, the international industrial federations affiliated to WFTU and the organisations within them were out to help unitary development of the struggle within the bounds of the multinationals, the Common Market and other inter-state capitalist associations in Europe and the whole world. Addressed to the international trade union centres, the ICFTU and the WCL, a call for businesslike co-operation among all trade unions reinforced the WFTU's clear-cut and explicit anti-monopoly programme of united action. That programme set out the principal goals of struggle against the policy of exploitation pursued by the national monopolies and multinational companies, against imperialism, against the adverse consequences of scientific and technological progress and the crisis of the capitalist currency system, for better working conditions and environmental protection, for expansion of trade union and democratic rights and liberties, for world peace, for disarmament and a ban on the use of nuclear weapons.

The WFTU policy of consolidating the international unity of workers and their professional organisations was taken a step further at the 9th World Trade Union Congress that took place in Prague in 1978. This was the most representative congress throughout the history of the movement. About a thousand delegates representing 303 union organisations from 126 countries had a hand in its work. The successful work of the Congress confirmed the growing trends for joint action among unions of different ideological viewpoints affiliated to different federations. The co-ordinated socio-economic policy of bourgeois governments and international monopolies, the Congress emphasised, had to be countered with concerted actions by workers internationally, above all in the fight for their vital interests, a fair wage and better working conditions, for a new and just world economic order. The Document on Policy and Action and the Universal Declaration of Trade Union Rights adopted by the Congress contained a broad platform for further concerted action and union solidarity in the campaign for workers' interests.

The development of new relations between unions of varying views marked by great trust and understanding was facilitated during the 70s by multilateral contacts between the three international union centres—the World Federation of Trade Unions, the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions and the World Confederation of Labour. Joint conferences in which unions of various viewpoints participated reflected the positive shifts towards international unity. These were the International Trade Union Con-

ference on Social Insurance held in Moscow in 1971, the World Assembly on the Struggle Against Transnational Monopolies held in Santiago in 1973 and the International Anti-Apartheid Conference held in Geneva in 1973. Similar international actions at the level of industrial unions grew apace.

Summit meetings by various union leaders became a fundamentally new phenomenon in the movement. The first unofficial consultative meeting by leaders of union centres in Europe took place in Geneva in January 1974 during the work of the Second ILO European Regional Conference. The leaders of 41 federations, including 17 affiliated to ICFTU, 14 to WFTU and 6 to ICL, took part in the meeting. Of the European unions affiliated to ICFTU only Force Ouvrière was not represented at the meeting, its leaders still orientating themselves in their international activity on the reactionary notions of AFL-CIO. Approving a recommendation "to broaden mutual consultations, exchange of opinions and experience" among unions of divergent views, participants in the Geneva meeting adopted a number of specific resolutions that laid the basis for further co-operation.

In line with those resolutions the First European Trade Union Conference took place in Geneva in 1975 under ILO patronage. It was attended by delegates of 44 national federations from 30 countries of Europe. The discussion of urgent issues of industrial environment, work protection, health and workers' well-being vividly demonstrated the real possibility of harmonising the positions of unions of divergent views. That was also confirmed by the World Conference on Employment held in Geneva in May 1976 and the Second European Trade Union Conference held in the same city in March 1977. Continuing their discussion on industrial environment, commenced at the First European Trade Union Conference, participants in the second conference put a new question on the debating table—that of trade union education, its role and importance in the workers' campaign to extend industrial democracy and to take part in production management.

The issues of detente, of paramount importance in today's politics, played a key role in the work of the Third European Trade Union Conference that took place in Geneva in October 1979. Participants underlined the profound interest of unions in continuing the policy of disarmament and security.

On the whole, considerable headway was made in strengthening international trade-union co-operation in the 70s. The stance of ICFTU, which during the 50s and 60s had openly supported the militarisation of Western Europe and NATO aggressive policy, along with leaders of the European Social Democrats, underwent certain changes. With the success for the detente policy, on the one hand,

and the deepening contradictions of capitalism, on the other, the ICFTU leaders began to display more realism in evaluating important international problems, including peace and disarmament, and in speaking out ever more forcefully against the arms race.

At the same time, from the early 80s the world union movement once again experienced a resurgence of right-wing reformist anti-communist forces. That occurred most palpably in the USA where the right-wing AFL-CIO leaders, backing the policy of the new US administration in undermining detente and stepping up the arms race, began also to pursue a policy of undisguised intervention in the internal affairs of Polish trade unions. They also attempted to impose that line on other union federations. Such a policy could naturally only complicate the situation within the international union movement, to some extent slowing down the positive processes underway in it. All of that once again testifies to the need never to underestimate forces opposed to the unitary processes within the world trade union movement.

Despite certain positive shifts in ICFTU policy, its leadership continues to renounce the important WFTU unitary initiatives under the pretext of "insuperable ideological differences". Many ICFTU declarations, including that of its 12th Congress on a number of serious issues concerning peace, disarmament and security, are effectively unsupported by practical steps aimed at organising concerted action throughout the trade union movement.

Progressive forces in the international union organisations still have to do a great deal to counterpose to the international capitalist front a united front of the international working class and all democratic anti-monopoly forces. Extremely wide possibilities are opening up in this area following the proposal made by the Soviet delegation at the 9th World Trade Union Congress in 1978 on holding a world union conference on socio-economic aspects of disarmament. The Congress appeal to workers and trade unions of the world, and the special message sent to ICFTU, stressed that the campaign against the arms race and for averting the threat of a new war is seen by WFTU as the key strategic objective in the programme of action of international trade unions during the 80s.

In spite of the obstacles set up by opponents of labour unity, the unitary tendencies are persistently pushing ahead, facilitating by the profound and in many ways irreversible evolution of the entire trade union movement.

* * *

The new role played by trade unions in capitalist society is apparent from their active participation in national politics, their mount-

ing interest in national problems of economic and socio-political development, the advancement of their own alternative programmes and a change in the objectives and methods of struggle. Besides, present-day unions are more and more speaking on behalf of not only the working class but of wide sections of the public as well. The steady leftward shift in union ranks, the widening practice of concerted action by unions, their organic involvement in the party-political struggle and the democratic movement, and the steps taken to heal the union rift internationally are all tendencies that typified deep-going internal changes in the union movement at the end of the 60s and during the 70s.

THE LABOUR MOVEMENT VIS-À-VIS GROWING INTERNATIONALISATION OF CAPITAL

Consolidation of the forces of West European capital, as well as the activity of the transnationals, is undoubtedly making the terms of the class struggle more difficult, yet at the same time it is creating new objective conditions for joint action by the working class, for extending the social base and elaborating common principles and objectives of the anti-monopoly and democratic movement. Internationalisation of capital objectively encourages internationalisation of the workers' struggle and reinforces the trend towards unity in the international labour movement. Exchange of information among workers and unions of different countries confronted by a single transnational has historically become the prime form of workers' international co-operation in response to transnational assault. By the early 70s, the labour movement had already accumulated a certain experience in countering it. For example, contacts had been made in the motor car industry between the United Auto Workers of the USA, the West German metal-workers' union and their British and Belgian counterparts. As a consequence, the information on concessions gained from Ford by workers at the Cologne works rendered considerable aid during collective bargaining with the Ford management in Britain.

Collection of information on company structure, the practice of the branches, level of wages, policy in labour relations, etc., and the exchange of that information have been practiced by international labour federations in several industries (like, for example, the International Federation of Workers in the Chemical and Related Industries, the federations of metal-workers and food-workers, etc.). Consultations and co-ordination of action among trade unions at factories belonging to a single monopoly in different countries are increasingly put on a permanent basis. International trade union councils and co-ordinating committees are set up (for

the factories of Ford, General Motors, Chrysler, Volkswagen, Kodak, Unilever, Nestlé, Michelin, Dunlop-Pirelli, St. Gobain, and so on).

Through concerted action in a number of instances success has been marked up in the fight against redundancies and the transfer of production to other countries, and for wage rises—as happened, for example, during the simultaneous strikes between 1969 and 1973 at plants belonging to the chemical concerns St. Gobain, Solvay and Cie and AKZO, backed by the International Federation of Workers in the Chemical and Related Industries. The action by British and Italian workers of the Dunlop-Pirelli concern in 1972 attracted a great deal of public attention when the co-ordinating committee launched a simultaneous strike of 60,000 workers in the two countries as a protest at the mass redundancies. The strikers were supported by metal-workers and engineering and technical personnel of some other enterprises. As a result, they managed to avert a further contraction of employment. During the strike by workers at the British branch of the French Rhône Poulenc chemical concern they received support not only from French workers, but also from workers of other EEC countries where the company had its plants, which enabled the British workers to gain a certain wage rise. In March 1976 tens of thousands of workers at Michelin plants in France, Italy and Spain downed tools as a sign of support for striking workers at the company's plants in Spain.

Many more examples could be cited of successful combined activity by unions in the fight against transnationals. At the same time, the differences existing in the union ideological and political views, in the degree of union centralisation, in the national labour legislation (for instance, in regard to solidarity strikes, many terms of collective agreements, wages, fringe benefits, etc.), just as differences in the priority of the union demands made on the transnationals, in many ways hamper the establishment of a united front of struggle against the international monopolies. As Pierre Gensous, then General Secretary of WFTU, noted back in 1973, the level of internationalisation of the union struggle lagged behind the rates of internationalisation of the capitalist economy.

Nonetheless, West European trade unions display energy in achieving unity of action in combating the transnationals. Some of the positive shifts have been expressed in fairly regular contacts between unions affiliated to the three main international federations—the WFTU, ICFTU and WCL. Attempts by state-monopoly groups in the EEC to isolate unions acting from class positions within WFTU by consolidating “social partnership” with reformist unions in ICFTU and WCL have not produced the desired results. Nor have their hopes to widen the rift between union organisations

of differing orientations been justified. The ICFTU and WCL member unions began gradually to take a more critical view of the EEC social policy and its mechanisms, especially since they experienced discrimination as "social partners". Right from the outset of EEC activity those unions were represented only in the purely consultative body—the Economic and Social Council (one-third of the seats) and in the Social Fund where they were also unable to have any marked influence on the policy and intricate bureaucratic procedures. At the same time, the General Italian Confederation of Labour (CGIL) and the French CGT began increasingly to try to use EEC mechanisms to safeguard the interests of workers of their countries. For a long time the two federations were kept out of EEC agencies, and only in 1966 were two CGIL representatives allowed into the Economic and Social Council, and two CGT representatives in 1970. In 1969 the CGT-CGIL Standing Co-ordinating Committee was recognised by the EEC Commission along with other union organisations.

The desire for unity, long evident in unions of different viewpoints, found its expression in the establishment of the European Trade Union Confederation. The joining of ETUC by several union federations not affiliated to ICFTU testifies to the potential for converting ETUC into a union organisation that could successfully conduct a dialogue with EEC agencies, safeguarding workers' interests and reinforcing the positions of individual union federations on both a European and a national scale. But ETUC activity is moving slowly. Great difficulties exist in drawing up and adopting a programme of action and in implementing concrete measures for its realisation. At the same time, ETUC sets out demands like revision of representation in the EEC Economic and Social Council, so as to ensure equality of working people with other groups and the possibility for each union organisation to have representatives on that committee in accordance with its real importance. Workers are insistently demanding that the EEC Standing Committee on Employment study and draw up proposals to increase employment and prevent redundancies without prior retraining, and that its opinion should be taken into account when decisions are taken capable of influencing the labour market.

From the end of 1977 ETUC leaders more than once met representatives of EEC leading agencies. During talks they stated that if no effective measures to fight unemployment were taken the ETUC would appeal to the unions of Western Europe to hold a one-day general strike.

Discontent with rising unemployment in Western Europe was so great that on this occasion the ETUC declaration was backed up by action. On 5 April 1978 as many as 40 million workers in the capi-

talist states of Europe held the "day of struggle" in defence of employment and purchasing power. Never before had the entire West European union movement expressed such determination and will to fight for workers' rights and against falling living standards. The principal demands of the "day of struggle" were to safeguard the purchasing power of wages and social benefits, to get a shorter working week, reorientation in economic policy towards promoting sectors producing material goods and services which the bulk of the public actually need, and to use scientific and technical progress to create rather than to eliminate jobs. Impressive demonstrations, protest meetings and lightning strikes took place on that day in the largest cities of France, Italy, West Germany (in Saarbrücken) and Belgium (in Brussels and the iron and steel regions). A total of 31 trade union organisations from 18 countries sent their lists of demands to employers' associations and the EEC Commission. The "day of struggle" was a great event in ETUC activity and the West European union movement. Communist and labour parties in EEC countries praise the ETUC initiative, noting that the April 5 "day of struggle" could become the start of extensive pressure, co-ordinated throughout Western Europe, on monopoly capital and bourgeois state power, countering their offensive against workers' rights.

ETUC decided in May 1979 to fight for a shorter working week as a measure against unemployment. Many unions affiliated to ETUC support those demands with mass actions, including strikes.

The fight to secure employment is not the only direction of concerted action. Unions of various viewpoints feel it necessary to set up industrial parity committees to study social problems and draw up agreements on a European level that would facilitate "progressive social harmonisation". Together with the right to consultation when taking any decision concerning socio-economic aspects of integration, the committees should also have the right to control decisions in the social sphere.¹ Those demands touch upon democratisation of EEC institutions and are an integral part of the democratic alternative to capitalist integration.

Meanwhile, while fighting to curb the power of the transnationals, labour organisations think it essential for EEC agencies to support their right to conclude international collective agreements within the framework of transnational firms (without damage to gains at individual enterprises), and also the right to strike and to create representative union bodies in the transnationals that would obtain information on all socio-economic problems and whose opinion would have to be consulted when taking corresponding decisions. The

¹ *Le Peuple*, 16 July-15 August 1974, p. 20.

trade unions think it necessary that procedures should be introduced enabling them to discuss decisions on redundancies and to take part in regulating monopoly actions affecting employment and prices, that the unions should have information on the structure functioning of decision-making centres, on movement of capital, and that provisions should be made for monopoly profits to be invested in the countries of origin.

During the 70s the tendency to promote the battle with the transnationals as part and parcel of the overall anti-monopoly movement became very clear. Communist and workers' parties have been playing a leading part in that.

In January 1971 London was the venue for a conference of West European Communist Parties that was specially devoted to the anti-transnational struggle. The conference set the working class such objectives as securing close co-operation among national sections of workers and co-ordination of their strike actions at transnational enterprises; having working conditions improved everywhere; depriving the transnationals of the freedom of international manoeuvre; achieving effective public control over the activity of both national and international monopolies.¹

The 1974 Brussels Conference of West European Communist Parties noted that governments in capitalist states, while appealing to workers to renounce the fight for their rights, to reduce consumption, etc., were creating favourable conditions for transnational activity and, at the same time, were hampering international unity of the working class. The Conference Political Declaration underlined that the danger of transnational activity was appreciated by all Communist parties; it particularly singled out political aspects of that danger and the need to establish and strengthen a workers' international front. It saw the fight against the transnationals as a way to consolidate the communist, labour and democratic movements in Western Europe.²

During the 70s all the industrially-advanced capitalist countries saw the beginning of a process of co-operation between Communists employed at various transnational enterprises. For example, in 1971 the French Communist Party set up co-operation with the German Communist Party involving communist workers at the Sollac enterprises in France and the Halbergerhütte GmbH firms in West Germany that were part of the Pont-à-Mousson and St. Gobain group. After exchanging experience in 1972 they agreed on establishing constant co-operation by communist workers in studying the social problems at the concern's enterprises.

¹ See *Comment*, Vol. 9, Nos. 5, 9, 10, 17, 23, 1971.

² *Cahiers du communisme*, March 1974, p. 3.

In the spring of 1976 the Communist parties of Belgium, France and Luxembourg drew the public's attention to the fresh threat to workers' social gains as a result of the setting up of the International Economic Association. The venture was initiated by the biggest West German iron and steel companies, and the Association included several West German firms (heading the cartel), the Dutch firm Hoogovens and the Luxembourg Arbed. The resolution adopted by the three parties contained the demand to put a stop to production cuts and mass redundancies. It also called for a fight both against the new monopoly conglomerate and the dangerous consequences for the workers of further plans for concentration in iron and steel.

In June 1976 the French town of Gennevilliers was the venue of a meeting of communist workers at French, British, West German and Belgian branches of the huge American car companies Ford, General Motors and Chrysler. Participants in the meeting demanded better living and working conditions and called for a profound democratic transformation inevitably leading to socialism.¹

A powerful protest demonstration and rally by iron and steel workers was organised in the autumn of 1976 by the Belgian Communist Party, West German, French, Italian and Luxembourg Communists also participating in it.

The end of the 70s saw vigorous struggle against the transnational onslaught on the vital interests of workers on both national and international levels. On March 7, 1979, for example, some 40,000 workers at the Dunlop-Pirelli plant in Britain held a protest strike against redundancies and were supported by workers of the same concern in Italy, France and West Germany. The fight by workers of the Austrian Glanzstoff firm belonging to the West German ENKA concern resulted in postponement of production cuts. And during the wave of strikes at Ford automobile plants in Britain the unions had the backing of the West German metal-workers union.

And yet the success achieved by workers in co-ordinating international action does not yet correspond to the level of tasks in fighting against the transnational social policy. The lack of close interaction between the national and international struggle narrows the manoeuvrability and restricts the power of the proletariat. It is usually only workers employed at transnational enterprises that take part in joint actions, which ultimately may lead to their becoming divorced from the national struggle.

Owing to the transfer by transnationals during the 70s of part of their factories and industries to developing countries against the

¹ *L'Humanité*, June 15, 1976, p. 4; *Morning Star*, June 15, 1976.

background of crisis in capitalist countries, the working class and its organisations have been faced with the task of supporting the workers' movement in developing states against the all-out offensive of transnationals against their rights and, simultaneously, fighting against reduction in jobs in the advanced capitalist countries. That twofold task was specially aired at the World Auto Conference held in Detroit in 1978.¹

The activity of Communist parties in EEC states in elaborating and implementing a working-class action programme that is a democratic alternative to European capitalist integration and transnational activity is of increasing importance in making the international anti-monopoly struggle more effective. Communist parties and trade unions, above all the French CGT and the Italian CGIF, are proceeding from the need for a radical transformation in the socio-economic nature of integration, and the use of the objective processes of production internationalisation in the interests of the mass of workers. The demands they have put forward relate primarily to the need to implement consistent measures to eradicate the omnipotence of the monopolies—such as democratic nationalisation of key industries, implementation of far-reaching structural socio-economic change, democratisation of EEC institutions, promotion of equal relations and wide economic co-operation with the socialist and developing countries, and further detente.

The Brussels Conference of West European Communist Parties noted that the adverse assessment by Communists of the EEC socio-economic policy was close to what was being said about the Common Market by many leaders of trade unions, socialist and social democratic parties, while the growing aspiration for concerted action among workers against the EEC policy bore witness to the possibility of drawing up such a programme of democratic revival around which the widest sections of the working people could be united.

The Berlin Conference of European Communist and Workers' Parties held in June 1976 was of paramount importance in working out a democratic alternative. The Conference unanimously advocated "to intensify, and extend solidarity and support to the struggle against the policies of multinational monopolies, which have a negative effect on the working and living conditions of the working people and flagrantly violate the national interests of peoples and the sovereignty of states".² The Conference set out the main strategy to combat the domination of monopoly capital, and the tactics of creating a mass anti-monopoly coalition.

¹ *Monthly Labor Review*, Vol. 101, No. 7, July 1978, pp. 12-13.

² *For Peace, Security, Cooperation and Social Progress in Europe*, p. 54.

An alliance of all anti-monopoly forces and their joint action are particularly important for further struggle against the monopolies, both national and international, for altering the nature of the integration processes in the interests of workers. EEC activity, just like that of the biggest international (and particularly transnational) companies, leads to objective conditions maturing that reinforce the international unity of the workers, the international unification of democratic forces capable of standing up to the combined efforts of international monopoly capital.

Elaboration of specific paths of working-class struggle against supranational monopoly capital, including the establishment of democratic control over transnational activity and EEC mechanisms acquires decisive importance for the revolutionary process in the capitalist countries and becomes a principal aspect of development and specification of the principles of proletarian internationalism within the communist and labour movement. The international theoretical forum of communists, held in Sofia in December 1978, made the particular point that one element of the world revolutionary process today was "the growing internationalisation of the class struggle caused by the internationalisation of production and exchange, the sharpening confrontation between socialism and capitalism on a global scale, and the requirements of the struggle for peace, for arms limitation and disarmament, for national liberation and social emancipation."¹

¹ Hermann Axen, "The Growing Role of Internationalist Solidarity", *World Marxist Review*, No. 2, 1979, p. 12.

Chapter 10

THE WORKING-CLASS STRUGGLE FOR SOCIAL PROGRESS IN THE MAIN CAPITALIST STATES (LATE 1960s-1970s)

Further development of the general crisis of capitalism, the associated new sharpening of its internal contradictions and the growing might of the world socialist community have all combined to pose the major question of radical change capable of resolving paramount social problems. That explains the fresh upsurge in both the workers' economic and the political struggle that began in the late 60s and developed into the acute socio-political crises affecting the major countries in the Western world.

The first big socio-political crises in the latter part of the 20th century broke out in the advanced capitalist states in a period of fairly high economic activity and in a relatively tranquil international situation. In that they basically differed from the socio-economic crises of the first part of the century. Subsequently, mounting economic difficulties became a major component of fresh socio-political shocks. That signified that acute socio-political crises could break out during both the downturn and the upturn of production, which testifies to a certain modification of factors that determine the development of the working-class struggle, its motives and principal orientations.

Socio-political crises revealed a sharp fall in the authority of the ruling class and its ability to govern effectively, to hold the mass of workers under its ideological-political hegemony, a qualitative upsurge in the people's spontaneous and organised activity, serious disruptions of political stability and, as a rule, substantial shifts in relations between monopoly capital and the bourgeois state, on the one hand, and the working class, on the other. It would be wrong to think, as do the French ultra-left or the Manifesto group in Italy, that that meant the formation of a revolutionary situation. Lenin once pointed out that not every political crisis leads to a revolutionary situation. Nevertheless, the emergence during the late 60s and the 70s of socio-political crises was a serious blow to the capitalist

system. Its consequences were all the more important with the growing role of the working class in the unfolding of events, its leading role in the broad democratic movement.

The socio-political crises at the end of the 60s and the early 70s were a kind of development of those tendencies in the labour movement and the political struggle that had been embodied in the July 1960 events in Italy, the Belgian general strike of 1960-1961, and the 1960 demonstrations in Japan. But by contrast with those preceding crises, the new ones were normally much longer and deeper. It was not just a single issue, however salient it was, but a whole nexus of problems that arose in the course of each of the crises. It was not a momentary clash of two opposing class forces, but a national crisis that in one way or another affected all classes, all political forces. Such was the nature of those events.

Despite differences and national peculiarities, the almost simultaneous emergence of crisis situations in several large capitalist states undoubtedly meant only one thing: capitalism was no longer strong enough to keep class conflicts within acceptable confines.

The socio-political crises, although suffered only by a minority of countries in the capitalist world, reflected a common dynamic of development of its class contradictions inherent in contemporary capitalism as a whole.

THE MAY 1968 EVENTS IN FRANCE AND STRUGGLE FOR LEFT UNITY

The socio-political crisis of May 1968 in France resulted from a militant action by the working class, the biggest in the country's entire postwar history. Its characteristic feature was the close interaction of the workers' struggle and a movement of non-proletarian groups in which university students played a central role, aimed at the existing social and political system. Thus, the crisis reflected at one and the same time shifts in the proletariat's awareness and social behaviour, a sharp growth in its activity in the fight against capitalist exploitation and substantial expansion of the social base of the anti-monopoly struggle. That was why the crisis posed in a particularly acute form the issue of the relationship between the labour movement and other social forces opposing the oppression of the monopolies; it exposed both the real potential for an anti-monopoly coalition, and the difficulties arising in its formation.

The May 1968 events, despite their unprecedented scope and uncommonly tempestuous and explosive character, were largely prepared by the preceding development of class struggle in the country. The strike struggle had continued to grow throughout the 60s. Its immediate cause was the mounting economic difficulties that capi-

talist economic modernisation and the ruling class's anti-worker policy had inflicted upon the workers. Between 1963 and 1966 a stabilisation plan had been carried out, aimed mainly at restricting wage rises. True, right up to 1967 real average wages of workers had continued to grow, but then the movement was reversed. In early 1968 the average monthly real wages of workers fell, according to some statistics, to the 1957 level.¹ Unemployment sharply rose: in April 1968 the number of fully unemployed was half a million, and partially unemployed—1 million.

Owing to the imminent complete removal of customs duties on industrial goods within the EEC, scheduled for July 1968, the French government tried to enhance competitiveness through economising on workers' incomes. Taxes began to climb. In the summer of 1967 a social security reform caused particular discontent: it raised workers' contributions and reduced certain benefits. The reform struck at the democratic principles of managing the social insurance agencies. Thus, the economic causes of the simmering discontent and the militant mood of the working class became intertwined with political causes. They were due not only to the government's socio-economic policy but to the anti-democratic nature of the personal power regime as well. Just as the workers were becoming more and more convinced from their own experience of the anti-worker policy of the state, so the authoritarian nature of political power and alienation of worker and democratic organisations from participation in state affairs were evoking their mounting anger. Once again the republican, democratic traditions of the working class and its traditional political activity and militant mood came to life. The stubborn efforts over many years of the French Communist Party and CGT unions, that had constantly emphasised the inseparable link between the battle for economic demands and that against the personal power regime, began to tell.

During the years of the Fifth Republic, as a result of the particularly vigorous part played by the state in socio-economic affairs and its undisguised authoritarian structure, the connection between monopoly power and political power was frequently more apparent than in a number of other capitalist states. At the same time, the overall growth in popular social demands and the development of people's requirements exacerbated discontent with social inequality in the area of material and cultural consumption, education and labour relations. That discontent enhanced the protest against anti-democratic procedures imposed by the bureaucratised state-monopoly system.

Student unrest that had broken out on May 3, 1968 in Paris,

¹ *L'Humanité*, February 26, 1968, p. 6.

and then in other university cities acted as the detonator of the mass strike movement that month.¹ The authorities used brutal police repression against the student demonstrations: mass beatings, arrests and tear gas. Many faculties were closed down. Student clashes with the police reached their climax in the night of May 10-11 in the Latin Quarter of Paris: as a consequence of police action more than a thousand people were wounded. The authorities' strong-arm tactics became the direct cause of the explosion of mass fury that had been building up. The major trade unions supported by the French Communist Party and the Federation of the Democratic and Socialist Left appealed to the working class to hold a national protest strike. On May 13, simultaneously with the strike, powerful demonstrations took place across the country. Along with demands to free arrested students and institute a university reform people were putting forward slogans aimed against the regime of personal power ("Ten Years is Enough!") and calling for the establishment of a popular government.

The day of May 13 became a turning point in the socio-political crisis. Up to that moment the students had been its main moving force; now the working class moved to the centre of the stage. In mid-May strikes broke out at the big factories: at the Sud-Aviation near Nantes, at the Renault car works in Clion and Flaine. On May 16 as many as 60,000 workers struck at the biggest industrial plant, the Renault works in the Parisian suburb of Billancourt. The strikers were taking over the factories and guarding them. Following in the wake of the manual workers, employees at public and private institutions and big shops, research workers and personnel in radio and television joined the strike. The scale of the movement was widening with every passing day. On May 18 as many as 2 million workers were out, by May 20 some 6 million, and on May 24 10 million out of the 13-14 million hired workers were on the strike.

The uniqueness of the development of the May events, the transition from student youth actions to a general strike of hired labourers, had its roots above all in the strained social atmosphere in the country in the spring of 1968. In such a situation the emergence of an acute conflict even around such a relatively local issue as the higher education system and status of students caused a sort of chain reaction amidst the widest social sections. But it was not a matter simply of that. The student movement was brought into being by a number of obvious flaws in the higher education system: its conservatism and backwardness, low living standards of students and poor conditions for studies, the insecurity of graduate employ-

¹ On the May events see Laurent Salini, *Mai des prolétaires*, Paris, 1968; René Andrieu, *Les communistes et la Révolution*, Paris, 1968; A. Daussette, *Mai 1968*, Paris, 1971.

ment, student alienation from the management of educational institutions, and the class-based, undemocratic nature of the whole system of education aggravated by the Fouchet reform introduced between 1965 and 1968. All those specific issues of concern to the students were sufficiently close to the hearts of wide sections of working people: during the 60s the number of workers aspiring to gain higher education for their children had considerably grown. Even more significantly, the student movement advanced the education problem only as a component part of the issue of democratisation of the whole of socio-political life: with great force it expressed an aspiration for genuine democracy, protesting against the diktat of the ruling elite and its total control of the individual. And although those motives appeared within the student movement in a rather irrational and utopian-anarchist form alien to the workers, they were bound to strike a note of sympathy with a large part of the working class.

Above all that affected young workers. Being the most educated and having on the whole the highest level of requirements among the working class, they were most concerned about social inequalities and the lack of prospects under capitalism. Young workers were initiators of the most militant forms of the strike movement: they started off occupation of factories, and took, as the CGT bulletin at the Renault factories put it, "the most active part in the struggle".¹

The transfer of the leading role in the movement to the working class led to a rapid expansion of direct objectives of the struggle and, at the same time, helped making them considerably more concrete. Demands for the immediate improvement of the economic and social position of the main mass of workers now came to the fore. With the general upsurge in the strike movement the level of those demands was considerably higher than in the preceding period. The issues of the rights of workers and their organisations had an important place in the May struggle alongside a wide range of questions concerning workers' economic status (wages, working time, employment, vocational training, pensions and other social benefits. The strikers demanded guarantees of union rights at the enterprise and the organisation of unions where the bosses had permitted only yellow-dog organisations before. Workers at factories, in research and public institutions demanded the right of control over managerial activity and participation in management, and that not simply in respect to wages, work conditions and organisation, hiring and firing, but generally regarding the work of a given factory or office. The respective functions were proposed to be taken on either by factory committees, their rights greatly expanded, or by special bodies

¹ *La voix de l'usine*, No. 73, 1968. Supplément "33 Jours", p. 30.

representing the workers. The most general demands affecting the great bulk of blue- and white-collar workers were formulated by the CGT and other union federations. At the same time, the demands and slogans made by workers of different industries, trades and factories were frequently very varied in both level and content. That was due to the extremely wide social composition of the movement, the differences in objective position and awareness of its participants and the influence of the various ideological strains.

In a movement of such sweep and mass proportions as the May strike, considerable elements of surprise and spontaneity were inevitable. Banking on that, bourgeois and ultra-left authors often depict it as being purely spontaneous, arising and developing apart from the organisations of the working class. In actual fact the unions (above all the most mass and influential of them, the CGT) acted as leaders and organisers of the struggle on both a national and local level. Communist Party organisations played a big part in the movement, especially at the large factories. The striking degree of organisation and discipline that combined organically with popular initiative were outstanding features of the May strike. The halting of work at industrial enterprises, of transport and communications did not lead to any social chaos. The unions arranged food supplies and protection of factories, they kept an eye on law and order and prevented violence and provocation. Health institutions had the electricity and food they needed.

For several days an utterly uncommon situation reigned in the country. The bourgeois state power with all its military and police repressive apparatus continued to exist, but it was powerless to alter the course of events. Workers took over the running of the factories, office-workers the institutions, and students the universities. At mass rallies and meetings of workers and students they freely debated burning social and political issues. Everywhere there reigned an atmosphere of festivity and militant enthusiasm.

The government and the employers were forced to make concessions. In striving to calm down the students the government passed a law through the National Assembly on an amnesty for participants in the student demonstrations. Talks began on 25 May in a building on Rue Grenelle between representatives of the unions, the government and the employers. An agreement (known as the Grenelle Protocol) was thrashed out by the end of the talks on May 27; it envisaged a rise in minimum wages of 35 per cent in industry and 56 per cent in agriculture, while the wage rise for 1968 was to be 10 per cent on average. Zonal differences in wage payments were to be abolished, pensions were to be raised, the working week gradually to be reduced to 40 hours with no reduction in wages, measures were to be taken to combat unemployment and improve voca-

tional training, the rights of unions at the factory were to be recognised (through a special legislation) and workers were to be paid half their wages for the days of the strike. The CGT, following its earlier-declared intention, put the results of the talks for workers to discuss. After Georges Séguy, CGT General Secretary, had spoken at the Renault works the workers decided that the talks had been unsatisfactory and voted for the strike to continue. The strike movement continued throughout the country.

Thus, two weeks after the strike movement had begun, the prospects for the working class winning considerable success in economic struggle were evident. That was clear from both the concessions obtained from the bourgeoisie and the unwavering militant spirit of the workers. The political prospects of the movement were, however, much less clear.

The scale and power of the May 1968 action clearly indicated that its motives and goals far surpassed the specific socio-economic demands presented to the employers and the state. A large part of the working class rose to struggle aspiring to gain radical changes in existing social conditions. Numerous mass demonstrations took place under the "democratic government" slogan put forward by the Communist Party. As an example of the popular mood, the results of a survey undertaken on the heels of the events in a worker district of Paris in June 1968 are indicative. Approximately a third of those surveyed said that the main aim of the May movement was the desire to change the prevailing social structure.¹

The May strike, aimed at the foundations of state-monopoly power, had a political character. As Waldeck Rochet, Communist Party General Secretary, stated, the movement's objective was "far-reaching democratic change in the socio-economic and the political field".

The unsurmounted and growing rift in the labour and democratic movement was a decisive obstacle in the way of realisation of the broad social and political goals. The setting up of a democratic government called for by millions of workers was only possible in France's concrete circumstances through concerted action by the major political organisations of the democratic opposition, first and foremost the Communist Party and the Federation of the Democratic and Socialist Left. In the period directly preceding the May events considerable progress had been made in that respect. In February 1968, the two organisations had made a joint statement in which they proclaimed their intention of fighting in harness against the personal power regime, for establishing "genuine and modern democracy", and they coordinated their positions on a number of issues concerning home and international politics.

¹ *Etude qualitative pré-électorale exécuté entre le 14 et le 18 juin 1968*, Paris, 1968.

Yet in the heat of the May movement, when the political outcome of the mass struggle depended directly on unity of the democratic forces, the leadership of the Federation effectively turned its back on joint action with the Communist Party. Demanding that the government step down and that elections be held, and putting forward the slogan of "replacing the regime", the then leaders of the French Section of the Workers' International SFIO and some other figures in the Federation banked on forming a government without communist participation. The principal motive of that stand by the socialists was evidently the fear that with the powerful upsurge in the mass working-class movement the role and influence of its most militant organisations, the CGT and the Communist Party, would sharply rise. But it was precisely in the May situation that any formula of political power implying isolation of the Communist Party, that was expressing the interests of militant sections of workers opposed to the existing regime, could less than at any time previously be a real alternative to the Fifth Republic. As Waldeck Rochet told leaders of the Federation of the Democratic and Socialist Left, you cannot seriously talk about a movement towards socialism without communists.¹

The tactics employed by FGDS leaders were founded on exploiting the profound differences within the mass movement itself. Owing to the specific nature of the social origin and position of the bulk of students, the weakness of their political experience, and also the insufficient attention of worker organisations to student problems, ultra-left anarchist, Trotskyite and other similar groups assumed the leadership in the student movement. The ultra-left leaders called for immediate seizure of power and were conducting unremitting propaganda against the Communist Party and the CGT. Matters reached the stage of direct clashes with the ultra-left trying to get past strike pickets and penetrate worker-occupied factories.

With the unprecedented sweep of mass struggle in which the government was unable to use force against the strikers, it seemed both to leftist students and to many intellectuals and union activists participating in the movement that anything was possible from now on, that the moment had come for revolution. Those views were held in one way or another by the United Socialist Party (PSU), some of the leaders of the French Democratic Confederation of Labour and even some members of the French Communist Party and CGT activists. The CGT and Communist Party leaders firmly opposed such sentiments. The Communists pointed out that the country lacked the basic signs of a revolutionary situation, that, des-

¹ Waldeck Rochet, *L'Avenir du Parti Communiste Français*, Paris, 1969, pp. 109-19.

pite temporary passivity, the authorities were by no means inclined to yield their ground and were perfectly capable of using the apparatus of armed coercion against the people. At the same time, wide sections of workers actively taking part in the struggle as long as it took place in relatively peaceful forms, were not prepared to support violent armed action. The universal desire for radical change did not yet mean for most workers the transition to positions of revolutionary struggle. In analysing the situation, Communists also took into account the social, ideological and psychological heterogeneity of people taking part in the movement, the inevitability of its differentiation in the event of a direct and open confrontation with state power.

In Rochet's words, the choice that had existed in May was as follows: "Either to bring the strike to meet the workers' essential demands and to continue, at the same time on the political plane, the action for necessary democratic change within the bounds of legality. That was the position of our Party. Or rather resort directly to the test of strength, that is to say, to resort to insurrection including the use of armed struggle for overturning power by force. That was the adventurist position of certain ultra-left groups".¹

On May 28 it became known that François Mitterrand intended to run for presidency in the event of elections and to appoint the former Radical Prime Minister Mendès-France as prime minister. That day a rally took place at the Charléty Stadium organised by the National Union of Students, the United Socialist Party and the French Democratic Confederation of Labour at which Mendès-France was present. The rally took place under anti-communist slogans. Thus, something resembling a bloc of the entire non-communist left was forming against the Communist Party and the CGT. The possibility of forming a left-wing alliance was therefore lost.

The ruling circles swiftly summed up the situation and went on to the counterattack. On May 30 after a brief visit to West Germany to garner support from the command of the French occupation forces, President de Gaulle made a radio broadcast. Roundly denying rumours of his retirement, he stated that he was dissolving the National Assembly and announcing parliamentary elections. De Gaulle's speech served as a signal to mobilise government supporters: a big demonstration of Gaullists occurred in Paris and the activity of their organisations increased. Tank regiments began to move up to the capital.

The strike movement meanwhile continued. It ended only on June 17 at the Renault works, on June 20 at Peugeot and June 24 at Citroën. The strike in the metal-working industry generally con-

¹ Waldeck Rochet, *Ecrits politiques. 1956-1969*, Paris, 1976, pp. 236-37.

tinued until the middle of June. As a result of the strikes concessions were gained from employers that went much further than envisaged in the Grenelle Protocol. For example, wages rose in metalworking by 20-25 per cent and in the chemical industry by 28 per cent. As a result of the May-June strike, despite the subsequent price rise, real wages in 1968 rose by a minimum of 10 per cent and much more for workers in some industries (metalworkers, railway workers, employees in social security, communications workers, and so on). At the end of the year the National Assembly passed a law guaranteeing trade union rights at enterprises.

The direct political results of the May events were quite different. At the parliamentary elections of June 23 and 30, the Communist Party and the Federation of the Democratic and Socialist Left lost about half a million votes each by comparison with the 1967 elections. The Communist Party obtained 20 per cent of the vote (22.4 per cent in 1967), the FGDS got 16.5 per cent (18.7 per cent in 1967). The Gaullist Democrats' Union for the Republic (UDR), which put up a joint slate with independent republicans, won an increment of more than 1.5 million votes. These results were considerably influenced by the split in the left that had appeared during the May crisis, and the lack of a clear-cut democratic political alternative to the Gaullist regime. Many workers who had previously voted for left parties, having lost political orientation in the circumstances, simply abstained. At the same time, the election results reflected a move to the right by a large part of petty-bourgeois groups: reactionary propaganda had been able to use the crisis events, particularly the "rebellious" actions of student youth, for dragging up the old "communist revolution" scare tactics.

The importance of the May 1968 crisis should not be confined only to direct political results. Further development of events was to show that the crisis sapped the foundations of the existing political regime, setting the stage for a shift in the correlation of social forces in favour of the working class and its allies. The crisis exposed the immense militant anti-monopoly potential of the working class, its readiness to fight for radical social change. The CPSU Central Committee Report to the 24th Congress described the battle of the French workers in May 1968 as an assault on "not only individual groups of capitalists, but the whole system of state-monopoly domination."¹ The May-June strike had a huge impact on the working class itself: its confidence grew in its own power, wide sections of workers better appreciated the possibility of a successful fight

¹ *24th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, Moscow, 1971, p. 23.

against the monopolies. During the strike, as many as 400,000 workers joined the CGT, and between May 13 and June 8 some 15,000 people, mainly workers, became members of the Communist Party.¹

The ruling class too was forced to draw serious lessons from the crisis: the whole political development of the country at the end of the 60s and start of the 70s reflected the attempts of ruling groups to avert a fresh explosion of social contradictions that would be comparable to the May crisis.

The events of May-June 1968 showed the mounting role in the anti-monopoly struggle of wide sections of hired non-manual workers, students and office workers. Many of them demonstrated not only a profound opposition to state-monopoly power, but also an ability to fight for socio-political demands of a wide scope, going far beyond the bounds of their narrow corporative interests. For example, the staff of many research centres were seeking to free research work of the influence of the selfish interests of capital and the deadening patronage of state bureaucracy; employees in some ministries demanded a curb on the power of the top administration so as to lend the preparation of political decisions a more democratic character; radio and television staff agitated for freedom of information and cultural activity, for replacement of state-bureaucratic control over the mass media by truly democratic control. Within the student movement a protest against values and ideals inherent in the bourgeois mode of life rang out loud and clear. What was typical of those groups was that they raised sharply the issues of democratising all aspects and levels of social life, even though they were frequently expressed in an anarchist and utopian form.

In confirming the important part played by intellectuals as an ally of the working class in the campaign for democracy and socialism, such actions meanwhile showed the immense difficulties standing in the way of establishing such an alliance. The specific nature of the situation and the psychology of the intellectuals and students often inclined them to separatism in regard to the labour movement, to the advancing of demands and slogans alien to the mass of workers and, in a number of cases, also to unjustified pretension to the leading role in the revolutionary struggle. Those tendencies were blown up in every possible way by petty-bourgeois ideological and political strains operating amid the intellectuals, by right and "left" revisionists, who had sharply come to life during the May events. The May crisis showed the importance of political and ideological work by the vanguard of the working class among intellectuals and students, and the necessity to clearly take into account the role of

¹ Lothar Peter, *Klassenkämpfe in Frankreich heute*, Frankfurt am Main, 1972, pp. 35, 36.

those groups and the specific ways by which they come to take part in revolutionary struggle.

The crisis also revealed the harm brought to the struggle by theories which, referring to the enhanced role of intellectuals, reject the part played by the working class in the anti-monopoly alliance. French communists fought consistently against such theories whose principal proponent within the Communist Party itself was Roger Garaudy—expelled from the Party in 1970.

The experience of the crisis had immense significance for the development of the working class's strategy and tactics in the fight for democracy and socialism under state-monopoly capitalism. The platforms of all organisations and tendencies acting under democratic or socialist slogans had a practical test in May and June 1968. The crisis uncovered the utter futility and lack of prospect of the ultra-left ideological-political premises that had a strong impact on the students and intellectuals in the movement and on certain trends within the labour movement. Naturally enough, the ultra-left subsequently lost a mass base even among students where they had felt strongest.

The French Socialists, the SFIO, learned a bitter lesson from the May-June events. They demonstrated that French Socialists cannot claim any active and independent role in the democratic movement until they give up their anti-communist and splitting policy within that movement; such a policy could bring them nothing but fresh defeats.

As events showed there was no revolutionary situation in the country, no conditions necessary for revolutionary seizure of power, for a general transition to non-peaceful forms of struggle. At the same time, the events placed in bold relief the question of how and to what purpose the revolutionary labour movement was to use the powerful upsurge in mass struggle, when by dint of the specific political situation it was not yet able to bring about a change in the nature of the power. Despite the great scope of socio-economic gains made by the working class through the May-June strike, many workers had shown a certain dissatisfaction with its results: at the large factories a significant minority (between 18 and 41 per cent at Renault) had opposed an end to the strike in mid-June.¹ Many workers instinctively tried to achieve more: to reinforce the shift in balance of class power achieved during the strike and somehow to curb the power of the employers. Extension of the right to union activity in factories was an important achievement in that area. By contrast with the strike movement in Italy in 1969, however, the strike in France, owing to the lack of coordination among the main

¹ *L'Humanité*, June 18 and 21, 1968.

union organisations, did not lead to the establishment of democratic control bodies with the right to intervene in the everyday practice of labour relations at the workplace.

Experience of the May-June events showed how important for the labour and democratic movement it is to have a concrete and solid programme of economic, social and political measures expressing a whole range of demands and aspirations of sections and classes involved in the anti-monopoly struggle, dealing with all problems of social life unresolved by capitalism. It is hardly surprising that after the May-June crisis the French Communist Party focused major attention in its ideological and political activity on, first, working out a comprehensive programme of democratic change that would pave the way to socialism and, second, on the campaign for unity of the labour movement, of left-wing and democratic forces, for the lack of unity had an adverse effect during the crisis.

At the end of 1971 the Party put forward its Programme of Democratic Government of Popular Unity which contained economic, social and political measures embodying the major principles of progressive democracy. The French working class and other sections of the public felt all the more urgent need for such a programme since development of the 1969-1971 socio-political situation had created favourable conditions for an advance of democratic forces. The long-term effects of the May 1968 crisis were felt with growing force and it became more and more apparent that it had dealt a severe blow to the political system of the Fifth Republic, considerably narrowing its social base. In April 1969, having suffered a setback in the referendum on territorial-administrative reform and senate reform, General de Gaulle, who had symbolised the Fifth Republic, retired. The subsequent presidential elections brought considerable success to the Communist Party (its candidate Jacques Duclos gained almost 22 per cent of the poll) and a crushing defeat for the Socialists (their candidate Gaston Defferre, nominated under pressure of the Party right wing, opposed to any alliance with the Communist Party, obtained some 5 per cent of the votes, or more than three times less than the FGDS had gained at the 1968 parliamentary elections). In the second round Georges Pompidou representing the Gaullists was elected president.

In the late 60s and early 70s the strike struggle continued. The experience gained in the May-June 1968 period now told both on strengthening militant spirit of the working class and on the progressive expansion of the list of demands being made during the strikes.

Actions by the working class and democratic forces for peace, and the movement of international solidarity with peoples fighting for liberation were now acquiring fresh scope. The campaign of aid to

the Vietnamese people subjected to US imperialist attack received particularly wide support. French Communists made great efforts to organise practical actions of solidarity with Vietnam. By the early 70s serious changes had taken place in public opinion. For example, Socialists had moved from a policy of justifying the aggression to its complete condemnation. Most French people sympathised with Vietnam's struggle and took part in one way or another in the world solidarity movement that was to play no small role in halting the aggression.

The growth of class and general democratic struggle in the country, the vigorous theoretical and political activity of the Communist Party widened conditions for promoting unity of the democratic forces. The profound crisis in the splitting policy of the Socialist Party oriented on an alliance with bourgeois forces was acting in the same direction. That policy was leading the Socialists to an ever greater defeats. It caused a constant decline in the SFIO membership and growing rumblings of discontent within the Party and among its supporters. That led to the emergence of a broad movement for reviving the Party, for a left alliance and renewal of dialogue with the Communist Party.

Regular talks between Communist and Socialist delegates had been going on since late 1969. At the municipal elections held in March 1971 Communists and Socialists in most major cities concluded pre-election pacts (whose number was double those in 1965). However, in 85 towns Socialist Party organisations refused a pact with the Communists. Concerted action on a trade-union level, especially between the CGT and French Democratic Confederation of Labour, developed very successfully.

In June 1971, Socialist Party revival was completed at the Epinay-sur-Seine Congress. Remnants of the French Section of the Workers' International merged with the Convention of Republican Institutions under a new name, the French Socialist Party. The Convention leader François Mitterrand, who at the Congress took a middle of the road position, between left and right tendencies, was chosen as the Party's First Secretary. The Congress proclaimed the Party's objective to be the socialist transformation of society, and in principle rejected tactics of compromise with political forces representing capitalism. On the issue of relations with the Communist Party the Congress was in favour of holding talks with it on a joint government programme, but on Mitterrand's insistence postponed such talks until 1972 so as to specify the Socialist Party programme before that time.¹

¹ *Le Monde*, June 15, 1971, pp. 8-9.

The signing on June 27, 1972 by representatives of the Communist and the Socialist parties of the Joint Government Programme, to which subsequently the Movement of Left Radicals adhered, was the most striking success in the fight for unity crowning the many years of efforts by the Communist Party. The adoption of that Programme had been preceded by rapprochement of Communist and Socialist positions which found expression, in particular, in the government programme of the Socialist Party published in March 1972. The Joint Programme, particularly the section dealing with the socio-economic measures of a future democratic government, contained many provisions from the Communist Party government programme. On a number of important issues a compromise decision was made. Communists and Socialists agreed on maintaining the alliance of the two parties throughout the period of activity of the newly-elected parliament. Communists insisted on adopting clauses on nationalisation of the banks, the largest insurance societies and 13 monopoly associations in key areas of industry. At the same time, the Party made certain concessions to the Socialists on rates of nationalisation. On Socialist insistence the Programme did not stipulate either France's withdrawal from NATO and the Common Market, or a revoking of the 1958 Constitution: it was proposed merely to amend it partly so as to extend parliament's rights and restrict the president's powers.¹

Despite the compromise nature of the Joint Programme, the very fact of its adoption was of immense significance for the further fight for democracy and socialism, for promoting mutual relations between Communists and Socialists throughout the capitalist world.

The effect of the Joint Programme on politics was already palpably obvious in the results of the parliamentary elections of March 1973. The election campaign took place in an atmosphere of growing left unity. The 20th Communist Party Congress in December 1972 demonstrated Communist loyalty to the Joint Programme's objectives. The left parties had agreed on withdrawing their nominations at the second round of the elections in favour of the left candidate who received most votes in the first round. The elections brought the left parties considerable success. They received 11 million votes, or 46.6 per cent of the total poll. The Communist Party, with 21.5 per cent of votes in the first round, maintained its position as the left's premier party. The Socialist Party, with 20.36 per cent of the vote, gained a great deal of ground. The number of parliamentary seats won by Communists increased from 34 to 73, and those of the Socialists and Left Radicals from 57 to 106. The elections testified to a serious leftward shift in the axis of French poli-

¹ *L'Humanité*, June 28, 1972.

tics, to the move of wide groups (it was precisely these groups that had primarily ensured the Socialists greater influence) to the camp of democratic opposition.

The left forces gained even more ground in May 1974. Owing to Pompidou's death, presidential elections had to be held in May. Mitterrand was put forward as the single candidate of the left parties, also backed by the CGT and French Democratic Confederation of Labour. Even in the first round he won 43.35 per cent of the vote, way ahead of the bourgeois nominees (Giscard d'Estaing with 32.93 per cent and Chaban-Delmas with 15.55 per cent). In the second round Mitterrand gained 49.2 per cent of the poll—only 1.5 per cent less than the right-wing candidate Giscard d'Estaing. Victory for the left seemed feasible at that moment. As the eminent French bourgeois sociologist Maurice Duverger noted, the presidential elections gave the left new unity quite incomparable to former alliances.

The presidential elections reflected a further polarisation of the country's socio-political forces, and a growing unity of the working class and the main mass of workers on a platform of anti-monopoly struggle. Some 70 per cent of industrial workers and the bulk of all hired labour generally supported the candidate of the left. So did most voters under 35.¹ The results therefore confirmed the realistic possibility of a successful struggle for decisive social change to which Communists had oriented the working class and its allies.

Of course, the path to realisation of that prospect is not easy. The struggle against such a powerful and experienced adversary as French monopoly capital requires the mobilisation of all forces of the labour movement, the strengthening and extension of the left alliance. Relations between the two workers' parties, the Communist and the Socialist, remained a complex problem despite their considerable rapprochement. The Socialist Party's marked evolution to the left and its left alliance policy helped in tackling the tasks facing the working class. At the same time, other factors were evident: the difficulties of overcoming SFIO reformist traditions and the mottled nature of the new Socialist Party's composition. Mitterrand's supporters were the most influential trend in the Party. Stressing the Party's loyalty to the strategy of unity of the left, they meanwhile thought it extremely important to change the balance of power in the left camp in favour of the Socialists, to turn the Socialist Party into the country's leading party, primarily through winning over a large part of the Communist Party's mass base.

¹ *Le Monde*, May 19-20, 1974.

That centrist trend was opposed, on the one hand, by the influential left trend which played an important part in drawing up the Party programme and vigorously favoured further strengthening the alliance with the Communist Party and, on the other, by the more moderate cadres of the former SFIO, many of whom were nostalgic for an anti-communist "third force" strategy.

In that situation occasional infighting within the left camp was natural. Communists felt it most important to be watchful against attempts to revive the traditional Social Democratic reformism and against undermining the hard-won left alliance. In their opinion, the consolidation and extension of that alliance ought to lead to unity of not only the working class but all anti-monopoly forces, an alliance of the French people. The slogan of alliance of the French people for democratic change, set forth at the Extraordinary 21st Party Congress (October 24-27, 1974), was further developed and specified at its 22nd Congress (February 4-8, 1976).

The growth in Communist Party membership (from 400,000 in the early 60s to 500,000 in 1975 and more than 700,000 in mid-1980)¹ and Socialist Party membership (some 150,000 in early 1979 as against the 50,000 in 1970) reflected the process of left movement taking place in France at a time of a profound sociopolitical crisis of bourgeois society. The same process was reflected in fresh success for the left in the departmental elections of March 1976 and the municipal elections in 1977.

The mass struggle for democratic change received a fresh boost during the period of economic crisis of the mid-70s. The working class reacted to the adoption by government circles of the so-called Barre Plan, austerity at the expense of the workers, with a 6-million-strong protest strike on October 7, 1976 and a many-thousand-strong demonstration in Paris. Despite certain vacillations, the Socialist Party and the Confederation of Labour actively joined the fight against the economic policy of the government and the monopolies which the Communist Party and CGT had been persistently waging. The combined actions of the left created an atmosphere of hope that the maturing changes would be carried through.

From mid-1977 the political situation in France was determined by preparations for the March 1978 parliamentary elections.

The Communist Party, reckoning with the new situation resulting from the economic crisis and realising the need for genuine transformation in the interests of the great bulk of the people, proposed to the Socialist Party and Radical Left Movement that they begin talks on reviving the Joint Left Programme. Those talks commenced in the summer of 1977. Communists were insisting on the

¹ *Cahiers du communisme*, No. 6, 1980, p. 9.

need to renew and step up economic demands, to expand the parameters of nationalisation by including in it a number of iron and steel, oil-refining and automobile plants, and to enhance the rights of trade unions in factory management. The Socialist and Radical Left leaders took a more cautious, moderate-reformist line. In September 1977 the talks ended without any result. Mounting differences between the left parties and, moreover, the bitter polemic that was dividing the Socialist and Communist parties told on the elections. In the second round the left parties gained 49.29 per cent of the poll and 201 seats in the National Assembly of the 491 on offer (including 86 to the Communists, 104 to the Socialists and 10 to the Radical Left).¹

After the elections dissension in the left camp grew worse. As a result of disagreement on a number of domestic and foreign policy issues, different assessments of the causes of the unfavourable outcome of the elections, relations between the left parties worsened in the late 70s.

The lack of unity in the opposition forces enabled monopoly capital to start an offensive against the positions won by the working class. The government, proceeding from monopoly interests, carried through capitalist modernisation of the economy at accelerated rates, without account for the onerous consequences that those measures were bringing for the working class and wide sections of the public.

From the autumn of 1978 the situation of metalworkers in northern and eastern areas took a sharp turn for the worse. The management of many engineering and iron and steel works announced their intention to close down the enterprises and dismiss thousands of workers. On October 17, 1978 the country's most influential unions held a day of action in defence of the rights of workers in Lorraine. Both industrial workers and members of other sections of the population came out on the streets during the demonstrations in the largest cities of the province. Shopkeepers and artisans shut down their shops. Barricades went up on the roads in northern and eastern departments and in city streets. On March 24, 1979 metalworkers launched a march on Paris.

Lessons of the 1978 parliamentary elections and the Party's tasks in the new situation were analysed at the 23rd Communist Party Congress held in early May 1979. Delegates subjected to careful scrutiny experience of the left alliance on the basis of the Joint Programme and came to the conclusion that its principal shortcoming was the limited nature of the pact signed by the leading bodies of the parties and not backed up by vigorous activity at the grass

¹ *Le Monde*, March 21 and April 9-10, 1978.

roots. The Congress set out as the Party's chief task the re-establishment of left unity on the basis of the powerful movement of a majority of the people by involving more and more wide sections of the public, members of all the non-monopoly groups of town and country in the diverse social and political struggle. French communists declared their firm intention to bolster solidarity with all revolutionary and progressive forces fighting against imperialism, for independence and peace, for democracy, socialism and communism.

The situation in France in the late 1970s and early 1980s was marked by many acute socio-economic issues remaining unresolved, by the continual strike struggle, the growing oppositionist sentiments and the exacerbation of contradictions within the right-of-centre alliance. The workers were not satisfied with the balance of political forces that had taken shape as a result of the 1978 parliamentary elections. The demands put forward during mass actions not only affected the vital questions of everyday existence, but also touched the very nub of socio-economic development. Despite the serious differences between the major left parties, powerful factors continued to foster trends towards both working class unity and an alliance of all democratic and anti-monopoly forces.

The desire for change was particularly apparent during the presidential and parliamentary elections of 1981, as a result of which the French Socialist leader François Mitterrand took the top state office and the left parties gained a decisive upper hand over right-of-centre deputies in the National Assembly. The new majority comprising the Socialist and the Communist parties, the Left Radical Movement and smaller left organisations now had 333 seats by contrast with 155 for the right wing.¹

On the eve of the presidential election the Communists and Socialists did not succeed in patching up the cracks in their relations, and in the first round they issued independent lists. Putting up as the Communist Party candidate Georges Marchais obtained 15.4 per cent of the vote. A certain weakening of the Party's electoral impact in that period is to be explained mainly by the fact that many of its supporters, anxious about the possibility of two right-wingers going through to the second round, had decided to cast their votes for Mitterrand. The vicious anti-communist propaganda and the very pattern of the election debates focusing on the programmes of the two main candidates also played a part.

Being one of the main forces of the left alliance and appreciating the whole measure of its responsibility in the campaign to implement the workers' demands and hopes, the Communist Party gave

¹ *L'Humanité*, June 23, 1981, p. 3.

energetic backing to the Socialist candidate in the second round, thereby ensuring Mitterrand a convincing victory with 51.76 per cent of the vote.

At the parliamentary elections held on 14 and 21 June 1981, following the dissolution of the National Assembly by the new President, Communists and Socialists agreed on mutual withdrawal of nominees and brought their positions closer on a whole range of socio-economic and political issues. The purposeful efforts of the Communist Party went a long way to ensuring the parties' great success with the combined total of 55.73 per cent of the poll.

A few days after the election, the Socialist and Communist parties signed a government pact by which four Communists entered the new government. Both left parties declared their determination "to promote the new policy that French men and women have chosen in electing François Mitterrand to the presidency of the Republic. They will do it in the National Assembly within the framework of the majority they had just formed; they will do it in the government in unshakeable solidarity; they will do it at local and regional levels, at enterprises, while respecting the proper functions of the institutions and parties".¹

Communists and Socialists emphasised their resolve to go ahead with the policy of change aimed to achieve greater social justice, increase the living standards of the poorer sections of the population, improve the situation in the economy and democratise life in the country.²

ITALIAN WORKING-CLASS STRUGGLE FOR DEMOCRATIC CHANGE

As in France, the labour movement in Italy in the 70s achieved the power, awareness and solidarity that created the real prospect of transition to radical social change. Activity of the working class acquired particular importance in the socio-political crisis that was extremely profound and protracted, revealing complete bankruptcy of the ruling class's strategy and its inability to find a solution to acute social problems. The coming to power of a broad democratic coalition headed by the working class became a real alternative.

The experience that workers had obtained in the first half of the

¹ *L'Humanité*, June 24, 1981, p. 6.

² Subsequently, however, the Socialist leadership did not live up to these pledges. In 1983-1984 the Socialist-led government went over to the policy of "austerity" and "modernisation", which meant an onslaught on the working people's living standards. This forced the Communists to withdraw from the government and launch a campaign against the anti-labour and anti-democratic tendencies in its policy.

60s played a huge part in the ongoing socio-political crisis. Above all, the limited and unstable nature of the workers' economic gains became apparent. The considerable wage rises squeezed out of the employers by workers in the battles of 1962 and 1963 were in subsequent years much devalued by worsening inflation and the government's deflationary measures (increase in taxation and social insurance contributions). The economic downturn of 1964-1965 worsened the workers' situation. At the same time, the half-heartedness and ineffectiveness of the reform policy pursued by the left-of-centre government brought to power in the wake of the July 1960 events dealt a blow to the reformist illusions that had developed among some working people. As a Communist official said, "The promise that 'something would finally change' seemed to inebriate them. Now people are again beginning to reason. Disenchantment has been great. . . They are ashamed that they believed in something that had no roots in the people."¹

A new wave of class conflicts began to surge in 1966 and 1967. Despite stubborn resistance by employers, the metalworkers and other sections of workers forced wider trade union rights. During the metalworkers' strike in 1966 for the first time the industrial federations of the three main union organisations—the General Italian Confederation of Labour (CGIL), the Italian Confederation of Trade Unions (CISL) and the Italian Labour Union (UIL)—came out with a joint programme of demands. An understanding was growing among the people that the concerted action achieved was insufficient, that they needed an organisational unity of the trade union movement. In the spring of 1966 a debate began in the unions on the possibility of such unity; this paved the way for a protracted and difficult, but fruitful, process of uniting the three union centres.

Fresh changes in the situation came from the rapidly developing student movement in 1967 and 1968 and then the 1968 parliamentary elections. The elections resulted in defeat for the political force that was the main hope of Italian social reformism—the United Socialist Party (PSU) formed in 1966 through the merger of Social Democrats with the Socialist Party that had moved to the right. The defeat meant a setback for the Nenni-Saragat policy of unprincipled co-operation with the Christian Democrats in government; it resulted in a crisis in the PSU, the withdrawal from it in July 1969 of the Social Democrats, a change of leadership in the Italian Socialist Party and its return in the main to class positions.

The processes that developed within the unions and the Socialist Party showed the failure of calculations by the ruling circles to

¹ *L'Unità*, January 4, 1967, p. 3.

bridle the masses. They indicated that that part of the left that had for a time collaborated with bourgeois parties was getting rid of the baneful influence.

The rapid growth of a militant mood showed already in the 1968 strikes that had embraced not only industries in which collective agreements were being renewed, but also many others where the struggle was being launched for additional talks at enterprises in defence and for a specification of rights already won.

Both sides, the employers and labour organisations, prepared carefully for the coming campaign in the autumn of 1969 to re-conclude collective agreements for 5 million workers of the major industries, appreciating that it would be a decisive test of strength. The activity of ultra-left elements in the union movement and outside it, trying to utilise the mounting workers' demands to popularise among them their maximalist and adventurist slogans and ideas on control over the movement, increased the tension. Hoping to split the workers, the employers took an intransigent position bordering on a challenge. The lock-outs declared in the summer and autumn of 1969 at Fiat and Pirelli were in unison with attempts by right-wing and anti-communist forces to have parliament dissolved and to minimise the leftward shift that had become obvious at the 1968 elections.

The trade unions displayed a great deal of flexibility and initiative: they renewed their platform in the course of the struggle itself and averted thereby a split in the ranks of the working class. Accepting that part of the demands by the ultra-left at factories which did not go beyond the bounds of the possible and expressed the militant spirit of the workers, they resolutely foiled attempts to impose pseudo-revolutionary maximalism upon the movement and to foster nihilistic rejection of union traditions. At the same time, they were able to rely on new forms of workers' organisation that had arisen back in 1968 and had become widespread in the "hot autumn" of the following year, that is, on delegates elected by general meeting of work teams, production lines and workshops and forming factory councils accountable to the general meeting.

That new form of leadership, via delegates, factory councils and assemblies, together with renewal of the union platform made it possible to render the tempestuous autumn movement a highly-organised character, and, with a few exceptions, to avoid excesses. "The 'hot autumn' was not a sudden explosion of discontent, it had been circumspectly planned as far as the movement's objectives and its tactical ploys were concerned."¹

The securing of broad solidarity of various sections of working

¹ *Il Mulino* (Bologna), January-February 1970, No. 207, p. 25.

people with the working-class movement was yet another success. Even the position taken by the Minister of Labour who had openly talked of the just demands of the workers bears witness to the authority of the strikers. The workers were aware of their strength in the "hot autumn".

In the autumn of 1969 not a day went by without big worker actions. Apart from manual workers, the movement, from late 1968, began to engulf white-collar employees, especially factory technical personnel; they joined the movement with a vigour never seen before. Altogether in 1969 there were 3,788 strikes (the average annual figure for 1959-1968 was 3,115) in which 7,507,000 people participated (the average annual figure for 1959-1968 was 2,809,000), with 37,825,000 man-days lost in strikes (an average of 11,134,000 for 1959-1968). These actions were unprecedented in scope even for Italy. During them Italy witnessed the biggest general strike (though it went unmentioned in official statistics) in its history on November 19, 1969, held in support of a democratic housing policy. About 20 million people took part in the strike—i.e., practically all workers.

Italian capitalists lost an important battle in the autumn of 1969. As a result of a 3-month struggle during which every week saw an average of 12 hours of strike, the metalworkers and engineering workers, backed by other sections of the working class, succeeded in concluding a collective agreement that was to serve as a model for agreements in other industries. A substantial wage rise (by 20,000 liras a month—i.e., double the amount after the 1962-1963 strikes), the gradual introduction of a 40-hour week and the recognition of delegates were all gains won after major representatives of monopoly capital had for a long time categorically denied even the possibility of any serious concessions; that meant an appreciable shift in the balance of fighting power towards the working class.

Thanks to the workers' struggle, hourly wage rates in industry rose by 23 per cent in 1970 alone (by 27 per cent in engineering and 33 per cent in the chemical industry). At the Fiat plants wages increased by 48 per cent in just two years.¹ For Italian monopolies that signified a need to put an end to the economic policy by which the competitive power of Italian goods had greatly depended on lower wages than in other advanced capitalist countries. But the major gain of workers in the "hot autumn" period was not the wage increase, but the change in the overall situation, an atmosphere at the factories embodied in elements of worker control over working conditions. The appropriate rights of unions and worker delegates were inscribed in the new collective agreements.

¹ *Le Nouvel Observateur*, June 14, 1971, p. 36.

Through the delegates and union representatives the workers were able to influence the conveyor speed and the number of staff employed on certain operations, and to control the observance of safety and sanitary regulations. Piece work, overtime and output bonuses were all issues on which worker representatives now had the right to intervene. The constant readiness of workers to use the strike weapon was an important guarantee of those rights.

While before the "hot autumn" trade unions, due to capitalists' resistance, were only able to set up their locals at 660 enterprises involving a total of 557,000 workers, by mid-1973 factory councils existed at 19,720 enterprises with a total of over 3 million employees.¹ Their activity effectively curbed the arbitrary action of the employers.

The "hot autumn" became only the first manifestation of a socio-political crisis. The erstwhile socio-economic policy of the ruling class was now put to doubt. But to replace it by a new policy, the labour movement had more than before to go beyond the framework of struggle at factories and make its demands to the state as well as the capitalists. Individual, haphazard actions for reform (pensions, health, housing policy) were no longer enough. So in the spring of 1970 the unions launched a campaign for a range of serious democratic reforms. A number of general strikes were backed up by struggle on the scale of individual regions, provinces and cities, and by the continuing struggle at factories. The workers began to demand adoption of radical measures against inflation, housing speculation, the transport chaos, reform of the health service, taxation, housing construction. In fact, that was the first experience of purposeful mass action for democratic social transformation. The working class had decisively broken through into the political sphere.

Yet, the transition to planned struggle for social reform engendered a number of difficulties. The left-of-centre coalition continuing to hold power, despite the steps taken under the impact of the popular movement (a pension reform, the statute on workers' rights that consolidated several working class' gains at factories, the introduction of regional autonomy), was sabotaging the other reforms as it yielded to pressure from reactionary forces. Under cover of the left-of-centre government the ruling class was preparing a counter-attack to nullify the "hot autumn" results. Police and judicial persecution of left-wing activists, bloody fascist provocations (such as the explosion in a Milan Agricultural Bank in December 1969), the bourgeois press campaign against "anarchy", "undermining the authorities" and "economic chaos" allegedly caused by the

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 37; *L'Unità*, March 26, 1974.

strikes—these were all intended to discredit the labour movement in the eyes of the general non-proletarian public.

This was facilitated also by certain errors made by the unions and other left forces. As Fernando Di Giulio, Italian Communist leader, was to put it subsequently, "In the autumn of 1969 the working class was surrounded by mass solidarity. During 1970 and later, in 1971, one noticed the progressive isolation of the working class. That was caused mainly by the fact that demands of reforms (of the tax system, housing construction, health service) were made in such a way that their connection with the more general issue of the country's development was not highlighted. One gained the impression that the working class ultimately was aiming only to gain certain changes in the social order that would improve its own position, without concern for the consequences and complications that that would produce in the overall economic development of our country."¹

The success achieved by the movement in the period 1969-1970 had little effect on the jobless and lumpen proletariat of southern Italy who tended to see the strikes as a "movement of the employed". The intermediate strata tended to see the cause of economic difficulties and mounting inflation, of social tension and disorders in what they thought was the drawn-out strike campaign and rise in wages. The interests of some groups of small proprietors in some measure suffered from the reforms enacted or envisaged. Dissatisfaction among those groups was also due to the manifestation of narrow-group, corporative sentiments among some sections of strikers.

The rightward shift among intermediate groups brought the neo-fascists into action, turning the principal hotbed of the labour movement, Milan, into an arena of constant provocation. In the South the neofascists received the mass support of the lumpen proletariat. All that produced a move to the right also in the policy of the main ruling party, the Christian Democrats. In June 1972, after parliamentary elections the left-of-centre coalition was replaced in power by the right-of-centre government of Giulio Andreotti which replaced the Socialists by members of the bourgeois party of Liberals in the government and utilised, too, the neofascist vote in parliament.

Yet the creation of a right-of-centre government by no means signified an end to the socio-political crisis or consolidation of the power of monopoly capital. The Communist Party, having declared its implacable opposition to the right-of-centre government, called upon the people to fight it. Socialists, left-wing Christian Democrats

¹ Fernando Di Giulio, "L'impegno politico della classe operaia", *L'Unità*, February 9, 1974.

and the trade unions opposed the policy pursued by Andreotti. Of great importance for foiling the reactionary ploys, bringing the working class out of isolation and giving it a new breath was the criticism of deficiencies the labour movement that had already in 1971 been launched by left forces, and above all the Communist Party, and had led substantially to surmounting those deficiencies in practice. The Communist Party pointed out, in particular, that the fight for reforms could not be merely the business of the unions. It was also a matter for the parties of the working class. It was they that ensured the political conditions for further advance in the battle for reforms, and especially the strengthening and extension of the system of proletarian alliances.¹

The Communist Party, and in its wake the unions, Socialists and other left-wingers, set out to the foreground of their struggle the problem of the South, underlining its extreme importance for the country's destiny, for the future of its democratic forces. Transformation of the backward social structure of the South, its accelerated economic development and, first and foremost, a decisive increase in employment, were, in the opinion of Communists, objective Number One, a criterion of the seriousness of the political course whose aim was to overcome the crisis. In the 1973-1974 period a principal demand of the strike movement at plants of the major companies like Fiat and Montedison was redirection of the flow of capital investment to the South. The working class was thereby invading a new sphere of production management.

The left-wing forces focused the battle for socio-economic reforms on demands for a new economic policy. In the communist interpretation, the long-overdue social reforms were not an appendage of rapid economic growth, but its condition, a means of surmounting the woeful disproportions typical of the national industrial mechanism; it had to be redirected to priority satisfaction of social needs (education, health service, housing, public transport, ecological issues), with new boosts for economic development thereby established. The demand for a new economic policy in the 1970s became a mark of mass action. That demand was put forward in direct talks with the government by Italy's three trade-union centres.

Their impact seriously mounted thanks to the process of their unification that was developing rapidly despite the difficulties and resistance by certain right-wing reformist elements within the CISL and the UIL. In 1972 the three union centres formed a Federation acting on their behalf on paramount issues. Agreement was reached on converting delegates and factory councils into grass roots links in a single union organisation.

¹ *Partito comunista italiano. Congresso 13, Rome, 1972.*

Owing to the self-critical and constructive policy of the Communist Party and the triple union Federation the links between the working class and wide non-proletarian groups, weakened in previous years, grew considerably stronger. It was this that enabled the left to bring down the right-of-centre government in June 1974. Under popular pressure the new left-of-centre government carried out certain reforms (for example, raising pensions and family allowances), made attempts to curb price rises, and somewhat stepped up the fight against fascist terrorists and conspirators. But the energy crisis of 1973 and the economic crisis commencing in the autumn of 1974 exposed government impotence, its inability actively to combat the social consequences of the crisis, to propose an effective economic programme, and to put an end to mounting corruption in the state apparatus closely linked with the hierarchy of the main ruling party, the Christian Democrats.

The decline in industrial output (by 9.5 per cent in 1975) once again brought the chronic problem of unemployment into the limelight.¹ Given as many as 1,250,000 fully unemployed (September 1975), partial unemployment sharply grew and hundreds of plants, many of them belonging to international monopolies, were under threat of final closure. In such conditions the left, and particularly the Communist Party and the triple union Federation, denounced the passive defensive tactics of combating unemployment that was confined to defending redundant workers and averting factory closures. They declared that their policy was now to fight for the adoption and implementation under democratic control of a comprehensive plan to reconstruct the economic mechanism to orient it primarily on securing employment. The unions emphasised that it was that new economic policy and not wage rises that would be the main platform of the strike movement. At the same time, they rejected attempts by the ruling camp to foist upon the working class the blocking of wages and restriction of the right to strike.

During 1975 alone there were 4 general strikes in each of which some 13 million people took part, a host of strikes and demonstrations in individual industries, regions and the big cities. Basing themselves on the experience of the 1969 "hot autumn" and subsequent years, the unions endeavoured to coordinate the actions and demands of workers in different industries to the utmost, to employ forms of struggle (like lightning strikes for several public services) that would not threaten the interests of wide sections of the public and would be supported by the bulk of the population.

¹ *Mondo Economico*, Nos. 13-14, 1976. Supplemento "Relazione generale sulla situazione economica del Paese 1975", p. 3.

They also took into account the need to strengthen the confidence of intermediate groups in the working class: a number of key demands (control over capital investment, for example) were not extended to small and medium enterprises, and the needs of the intermediate strata had a prominent place in the socio-economic proposals of the left forces (facilitating credit, encouraging co-operation, enhancing the role of small firms in developing the South, etc.). The Communist Party organised conferences concerned with the economic prospects and they evoked great response among the intermediate sections of the population.

Communist activity rose markedly in relation to civil rights and liberties that affected the public generally. Due mainly to their efforts, reaction's attempts in the 1974 referendum to revoke the law permitting divorce were foiled, and then a new family code was drawn up and adopted ensuring more equality for women. Communists drew attention too to issues of democratising the internal organisation of the armed forces and the police, working out the appropriate proposals.

The Italian Communist Party based itself on the notion that to surmount the deepening crisis of the whole of Italian society it had to induce the main forces of the working class and, above all, Communists, to take part in running the country.¹ That demand acquired increasing popularity and began to gain support both in the working class and among a large part of the intermediate strata, including influential groups of intellectuals.

Through its broad unity policy the Party was trying, among other things, to avert the split in the nation, to win over those vacillating people, particularly the intermediate strata, who could in the worsening situation be an easy catch for the ultra-right. The Party drew certain lessons from the fascist coup in Chile in 1973. It proposed a "historic compromise" between the three major democratic forces in the country—Communists, Socialists and Catholics.

The 14th Party Congress in 1975 stressed that the "historic compromise" ought not to be perceived merely as a proposal for a new government or new majority with communist participation. The policy was above all an urgent search for mutual understanding, co-operation and unity of the various social and political forces; it was to counter the strategy of tension and policy of rift with which reaction was trying to divide potential participants in a wide democratic alliance. The Party regarded political unity of the working class as the foundation stone of the historic compromise strategy. In its opinion, in the crisis situation affecting all

¹ *Partito comunista italiano. Congresso 14, Rome, 1975.*

aspects of life in society, the working class could be the initiator of overcoming the crisis in a direction that would lead to reconstructing society on new lines, would invest into it values and criteria inherent in socialist ideals.¹

The local elections of June 15-16, 1975 demonstrated considerable growth in communist authority and, simultaneously, a fall in the prestige of the ruling circles. In 18 regions (out of a total of 20) where the elections were held, the Communist Party obtained 32.4 per cent of the vote (against 26.9 per cent at the previous elections in 1970) and thereby almost reached in influence the major ruling party of Christian Democrats. The balance between these two parties therefore took a sharp turn. Never since 1946 had the Communist Party obtained such a large boost in votes; it emerged the winner in virtually all the major cities.

These elections, which received the epithets of "June earthquake" and "silent insurrection" in the bourgeois press, marked a new stage in the development of socio-political crisis in Italy. They substantially altered the political picture in the localities. The "red" regions of Emilia, Tuscany and Umbria where leadership in the autonomous power bodies belonged to the left were now joined by Piedmont and Liguria, the industrially highly-developed part of the country. In Milan, Turin, Florence, Venice and other industrial centres urban self-government bodies were now set up on the basis of a coalition whose principal element comprised Communists and Socialists. Left-governed authorities now existed on a territory inhabited by about half the population of Italy.

The shift to the left also affected the policy of certain parties. For example, the leadership of the Socialist Party declared in the wake of the elections that the left-of-centre policy had finally outlived itself and set the Party the task of working out a "socialist alternative" envisaging "a democratic, gradual transition to socialism based on accord".² Criticising the Communist Party's strategic and organisational principles and its international ties, the Socialists advocated at the same time that Communists be involved in decision-making in some form at the current stage. For the first time in many years official meetings between leaders of both parties became common and they noted their closeness on many questions.

The policy of the Christian Democratic Party, refusing outright to involve the Communist Party in governing the country, increasingly isolated the government from the working class and other social forces in the country, and narrowed its social and parliamen-

¹ *Ibid.*

² *L'Avanti*, October 17, 1975, p. 3.

tary base. The shift to opposition by Socialists and other parties caused an early dissolution of parliament, a second within four years.

The new elections of June 20-21, 1976 brought great success to the Communist Party which not only held its vote first obtained at the municipal elections, but also gained even more mass support. In obtaining 34.4 per cent of the poll (as against 27.1 per cent in 1972) it extended its representation in the House of Deputies from 179 to 227 seats.

The elections established a situation in the country and parliament in which it was no longer possible to ignore the Communist Party when determining the composition and policy of the state ruling agencies. The Communist Pietro Ingrao became Chairman of the House of Deputies and Communist deputies headed a number of parliamentary committees. The incoming government of the Christian Democrat Giulio Andreotti was only able to obtain a vote of confidence in parliament due to the Communists and members of most other parties abstaining. His government had to include in its programme a number of clauses (reorganisation of the economy in the national interest, enhanced state programming, measures to reduce unemployment, etc.) on which the left had long insisted, and it had constantly to consult with them when taking paramount decisions.

In July 1977, after long and tough negotiations, agreement among 6 parties, including the Communist, was reached on the government programme. The following March (for the first time in 30 years), the Communist Party entered the parliamentary majority supporting Andreotti's administration. The forced backdown of the Christian Democrats from the policy of discriminating against the Communists was testimony to the growing strength and influence of the labour movement, and success for the Party policy of uniting all democratic forces for overcoming the difficult crisis in the country.

The impact which the Communists were therefore able to have on decision-making at governmental level encouraged the elaboration and approval between 1976 and 1978 of several important laws—on state capital investment in industrial development (the "reconversion law") and the economy of the backward South, on measures for vocational training and provision of jobs for young people, on transferring a number of powers from state authorities to regional and local self-government agencies, on democratising the armed forces, on legalising abortion, etc.

The success of the left provoked mounting resistance from reaction. Many of the laws passed remained merely paper legislation owing to sabotage by a large part of the state apparatus and re-

sistance by powerful forces within the Christian Democrats and the ruling class. The activity of underground terrorist groups, operating under the guise of "red" revolutionaries by contrast with the early 70s, was now widely used to discredit the parliamentary coalition involving the Communist Party. Those groups, complemented mainly by members of declassed youth giving way to a mood of despair and impatience, could only act successfully with the backing of influential forces within the ruling circles. In the spring of 1978 they seized and then murdered the ex-prime minister and President of the National Council of the Christian Democratic Party Aldo Moro, the chief champion of agreement with the Communists. That act was intended not only to demonstrate that bringing Communists closer to power would, ostensibly, lead to growing chaos in the country, but also to change the balance of power in the leadership of the Christian Democrats.

The enemies of change banked greatly also on inner contradictions within the ranks of the parliamentary majority, on the complex composition and differences in the stance of social forces backing it. While the more moderate among them were circumspect regarding Communist participation in the coalition and the intended reform programme, another part, above all many workers, jobless young people and the southern poor, displayed impatience over the rate and restricted character of the changes. Differences also came to the surface in the union movement. While the majority in the triple union Federation was advocating as the central plank of its platform the fight to increase investment under democratic control for reconstructing the economy and with account for public needs and provision of employment, the moderate wing and the ultra-left preferred to launch a traditional struggle to raise wages, which threatened to isolate the proletariat from its allies. Certain weaknesses were apparent, too, in the Communist Party stand; the Party was not always able to act simultaneously as a "government party" and a "campaigning party".¹

Concerted action by the left was weakened by the position taken by leaders of the Italian Socialist Party. Bettino Craxi, elected in 1976 as the Party's political secretary, banked on bringing the Party closer to the West European Social Democrats, especially the Social Democratic Party of Germany. Relying on support from influential parties of the Socialist International, he tried to change the balance of power between the Communist and Socialist parties in favour of the latter. That was the purpose of the fierce campaign he launched in the summer of 1978 against the ideological principles and traditional international ties of the Communist Party.²

¹ *L'Unità*, July 7, 1979.

² See, for example, *L'Espresso*, August 27, 1978.

The growing differences in the left camp were utilised by the Christian Democratic right wing whose influence had grown within the Party after Moro's death. Under pressure from the right wing the DC pursued a course in the autumn of 1978 towards unilateral action in government and parliament intended effectively to torpedo the programme of accord. In those circumstances the Communist Party decided in January 1979 to withdraw from the parliamentary majority and demanded the creation of a government of national unity with direct Communist participation. The DC categorical refusal to meet that demand and the impossibility of setting up a government on another parliamentary basis led to parliament being dissolved and to the third election in the 70s, held on June 3-4, 1979. The concentrated attacks by Communist adversaries from the right and the "left" and popular disenchantment with the results of the activity of a government relying on a broad parliamentary majority led to the Communist Party losing votes at the polls (30.4 per cent as against 34.4 per cent in 1976).¹ Neither the DC nor the Socialists succeeded. The balance of power in parliament did not change appreciably. All the unresolved issues rose up with renewed power after the elections, especially the question of involving working-class political organisations in governing the country.

The Communist Party 15th Congress held in late March-early April 1979 confirmed the Party's orientation on implementing radical democratic reforms and a broad alliance policy. The Congress analysed the shortcomings in Party work following 1976. Decisions of the July 1979 Plenary Meeting of the Party Central Committee also spoke of deficiencies in work at the grass roots. The meeting noted that the Party had not managed sufficiently to show the masses the essence of the new conditions, to establish enough understanding with the unions and the youth movement, to enlist vigorous support by workers for its demands. There had been certain negligence also in communist work in local self-government bodies.² Experience showed that the Party had to step up the popular pressure on the ruling classes to force them to make concessions. At its June 1980 Plenary Meeting the Party defined its main task as strengthening links with the masses and mobilising the working people for active struggle for progressive changes in all spheres of Italian society.³

At the end of the 70s and start of the 80s the bourgeois ruling quarters attempted to make a counter-assault upon the workers' economic and socio-political gains. The DC increased pressure on the Socialists, attempting to force them to renounce co-operation with

¹ *Rinascita*, June 8, 1979, p. 3.

² *L'Unità*, July 7, 1979.

³ *L'Unità*, June 25, 1980.

Communists in local self-government bodies and to restore the left-of-centre coalition that had suffered political fiasco. The entry of the Socialist Party into government in the spring of 1980 complicated relations between Communists and Socialists. All the same, the Communist Party did not stop its efforts to re-establish unity of the left, and at its June 1980 Plenary Meeting it appealed to the Socialists to start talks on concrete points of a programme and methods of concerted action.¹

The working class and all working people in Italy gave a firm rebuff to the bourgeois counter-offensive. At the local elections in June 1980 the Communist Party managed to stop the rot that had begun at the previous year's parliamentary elections, and obtained 31.5 per cent of the vote. The strike movement also began to pick up in 1979 and 1980.

Thus, the fight of the Italian working class in the socio-political crisis led to a marked strengthening of its influence on the country's politics. Without Communist participation it was impossible to resolve the dire economic and social problems or to set up any stable government.

SHIFTS IN THE BRITISH LABOUR MOVEMENT

The main factor of the developing socio-political crisis in Great Britain was the many years of economic stagnation affecting the nature and forms of class contradictions and the policy of the ruling class. The export of capital (increased since Britain joined the Common Market), the high level of military expenditure linked up with attempts to cling on to remnants of the former imperial positions were all additional obstacles in the way of reallocating resources to internal socio-economic development.

Economic stagnation strengthened resistance by employers and the government to demands to raise wages. Britain's joining the Common Market on 1 January 1973 and the associated rapid rise in consumer prices, combined with government and monopoly attempts to reduce labour costs sharpened class antagonisms even more. For the first time since World War II unemployment became a serious problem for British workers.

The Conservatives who came to power in 1970 managed to carry through parliament the anti-strike Industrial Relations Act which involved the registration of unions, sanctioned intervention by government bodies in their internal affairs and considerable restrictions on the right to strike. But the firm opposition from the most consistent and radical forces in the trade unions, and then the entire trade

¹ *Ibid.*

union movement, calling for a boycott of the new legislation and the mechanism created to administer it, ultimately led to the authorities not being able to set the mechanism in motion.

Intended to draw the unions into the system of state-monopoly regulation with simultaneous serious impairment of their rights, the new Act (which came into force in February 1972) caused a sharp exacerbation of the class struggle in the country. The successful struggle of the Upper Clyde shipworkers in 1971 and 1972 against the closure of the docks, the victory of the 1972 miners' strike and other workers' actions convincingly demonstrated that the Tory government, even relying on the new anti-union Act, was unable to defeat the working class and its organisations. A few unions that had registered in line with the Act, were expelled from the TUC. The National Industrial Relations Court order to halt "illegal" picketing by dockers at a London warehouse met determined resistance. The arrest for disobedience of three worker leaders provoked a dockers' strike in June 1972 supported by other workers, which forced the authorities to draw back. When a month later 5 shop stewards led by the Communist Burnie Steer were arrested for not carrying out the NIRC order the TUC General Council threatened to call a general strike. Once again the Tories had to back down. NIRC ordered the shop stewards to be set free and the government refrained from further resort to the Industrial Relations Act.

Workers held mass solidarity strikes against government attempts to fine the unions. Resistance to the Industrial Relations Act brought into struggle in defence of democratic liberties hundreds of thousands of workers who had hitherto stood aside from the class proletarian movement. Nevertheless, the firm hand policy continued. In November 1972 Edward Heath's government published "A Program for Controlling Inflation. The First Stage" white paper and a bill on fighting inflation. A full wage freeze was introduced for a period of 150 days, affecting some 3 million people.

The second stage of the inflation battle (incomes policy) began on 1 April 1973 with the setting of an upper limit to wage rises (roughly 7-8 per cent). Strikes to raise that limit were branded as a criminal offence punishable by a fine of £400. At the same time the government announced the setting up of a wages tribunal.

The Tory policy on wages produced an explosion of fury among working people. Describing the situation within the labour movement, Hugh Scanlon, President of the Engineers' Union, stressed that all the major forces of the British working class were being drawn into the battle against the Tory policy.¹ The battle was par-

¹ *Morning Star*, March 14, 1973.

ticularly fierce in the state sector: for the first time in their history some 250,000 public servants went on strike.

An extraordinary TUC Conference called on March 5, 1973 passed a resolution to hold a national "day of protest" against the government incomes policy. That resolution was supported also by the Labour Party National Executive. The "day of protest" was held on May Day and marked by strikes and mass demonstrations throughout the country.

The working class also took an active part in the fight against the Tory Housing Finance Acts which envisaged a doubling of rents for council housing. In law-abiding Britain joint action committees set up in many towns and counties with the participation of the unions, shop-steward committees, Communists and Labour Party members campaigned for defying the legislation.

The unusual force of confrontation between organised labour and capital in 1972 and 1973 was due, according to British Communists, to a crisis in the whole social system. To overcome the crisis, they believed, it was necessary to back up the challenge thrown down to the Conservatives on the industrial front with a political challenge just as strong. In that connection the immediate objective was to defeat the Tory government and bring a Labour government to power that would carry through a socialist policy.

In the autumn of 1973 the TUC and Labour Party conferences worked out demands reflecting the leftward shift in the labour movement and, to some extent, representing an alternative policy to the Tories. The TUC demanded the revoking of the Industrial Relations Act, a price freeze, increased taxation on top incomes and urgent measures to help old-age pensioners and other least provided-for groups in the population. The programme documents drawn up by the Labour Executive and the TUC put forward as the platform of a future Labour government higher pensions, rigid control of prices, nationalisation of land for housing construction, a tax reform increasing taxation of the rich, revoking of the anti-union Act and the Housing Finance Acts, revision of the terms of Britain's membership in the Common Market, nationalisation of the shipyards, ports, the aircraft industry and gas and oil extraction in the North Sea, state control and planning of private company activity, and the establishment of a state body for running enterprises with state participation.¹ Although the Labour Programme restricted the limits of possible nationalisation and did not give a clear alternative to the Tory policy in regard to the Common Market, it was the most radical of all those adopted by the Party since 1945. Reflecting the mounting social and political demands and require-

¹ *Labour's Programme for Britain 1973*, London, 1973, p. 14.

ments of the common people, it played a positive part in helping to bring down the Conservatives.

But it was the workers, the mass movement that dealt the decisive blow to the Tory government. By late 1973 the depressing result of Tory rule became clear. The first year of Britain's membership in the EEC had seen a sharp increase in the balance of payments deficit, a drop in the value of the pound by 20 per cent and price rises of 12 per cent. An economic crisis dealt a heavy blow to the economy. In seeking a way out the government tried to put the blame for economic upsets on the workers and took in the most militant part of the workers in a face-to-face confrontation. The miners and railway workers, who demanded pay rises beyond the limit set by the third stage of the incomes policy (begun in the autumn of 1973) and stopped all overtime, were accused of undermining energy supplies for the industry. When the miners' union decided to halt work completely and declared an official strike, the government introduced a state of emergency, restricted electricity use for heating and lighting and brought in a 3-day working week for the major part of the country's factories. In so doing it caused some £2 billion worth of damage to the economy. The authorities flatly rejected union compromise proposals, calculating that the miners' strike would give ample reason for an anti-union campaign with which the Tories hoped to win the elections they had called.

But the calculation went wildly wrong.

The miners were by no means isolated, they, on the contrary, received massive backing. The parliamentary elections of February 28, 1974 brought down the Conservatives and their government. The Labour government then proceeded to meet the miners' principal demands for wage rises.

So for the first time in British history a strike had become the direct cause of elections and a government's downfall. The tense rivalry between classes that had been going on for several years had risen to a higher party-political level. On all the major issues of class conflict the Conservative government (and in some measure also the bourgeois state that it personified) suffered defeat. The workers not only fought off encroachments upon their living standards, they prevented any trampling upon union rights or confining of their activity within limits acceptable to the ruling groups; they prevented the authorities from making the unions agencies of class collaboration. The influence of militant elements, including Communists, had grown within the unions.

The growth of the socio-economic and political activity of the working class during the 60s and particularly at the start of the 70s led to issues of the relationship between unions and the state being brought into the centre of the inner political struggle. The im-

pact of the unions on the Labour Party's political course grew and, as a consequence, the battle between the opposition Labour and ruling Conservative parties became more acute. As a result of the growing activity of the working class and the unions, which was particularly manifest during Conservative rule, the political weight of the organised labour movement markedly strengthened.

Of course, changes occurred mainly in the trade unionist basis of the labour movement, to a much lesser degree in its political superstructure. Trade unionism became more politicised, but its essence as previously boiled down to supporting the workers' economic interests. The unions and the labour movement as a whole began more widely to use the political means of class struggle, resorted to law-breaking, yet the economic struggle remained, as before, the main form. As British Communists noted, the main point of departure for mass struggle was still the conviction that all the necessary improvements for which the workers were fighting could be attained within the bounds of the existing system.¹

The determination and strength with which the working class rejected Tory policy, and the direct political defeat the Tories suffered at the hands of the unions created favourable conditions for implementing a whole range of demands set forth by the labour movement. On coming to power, the Labour government, in accordance with the above-mentioned party programme documents, passed through parliament laws revoking the anti-union Industrial Relations Act and the Housing Finance Acts. It raised old-age pensions, somewhat increased taxes on the well-to-do, introduced bills to nationalise the aviation and shipbuilding industries. In 1974 the government put no hard and fast limits on wage rises, as a result of which some sections of workers gained marked improvements. It adopted laws banning discrimination against women in employment and wages.

And yet the advent of the Labour government also brought certain negative tendencies in the union movement that were most fully embodied in the idea and practice of the Social Contract.

In 1975 the leaders of the unions and the TUC Conference formally ratified the government's "anti-inflation bill" envisaging rigid curbs on wage rises. Despite occasional hitches the agreement was generally observed by the unions and the overall wage rise was only 3 per cent above the designated 10 per cent. In a situation when rising consumer prices for the same period comprised about 20 per cent, that led to a direct fall in people's purchasing power. In June 1976 a special TUC Conference by an overwhelming majority approved a new union pact with the government, with terms even harsher.

¹ *Comment*, December 2, 1972, Vol. 10, p. 378.

Although there was a considerable shift to the left in the unions in the latter part of the 60s and early 70s, the movement was unprepared to adopt a programme which would have constituted a clear-cut alternative to the class collaboration and Social Contract policy pursued by the Labour right-wing leadership. While the Communist Party at its 34th Congress in 1975 worked out a policy for escaping from the economic crisis, combining measures for enlivening the economy and radical socio-economic change,¹ the Labour left was unable to agree on a common policy. Many in the Labour left resolutely supported the Social Contract, assuming that it would provide sufficiently wide scope for affecting the Labour government and enhancing the role of the trade unions in socio-economic and political spheres.

The differences that had arisen in the left wing of the labour movement over the Social Contract invariably hampered progress towards broad left unity and had a certain detrimental effect on it. The overall intensity of class struggle lessened in 1974 and 1975 by contrast with the 1968-1973 period, the strike activity of workers declined markedly. The government's socio-economic policy began increasingly to display a shift to the right, and concessions to the monopolies and international finance capital were accompanied by increasingly firm infringement of workers' interests finding its most obvious expression in reduced expenditure on social needs.

Naturally, such a turn in government policy of Social Contract began to cause mounting discontent among workers and their organisations.

The biggest popular action reflecting these sentiments and assuming an acutely political character was the powerful national demonstration on November 17, 1976 in London. It protested against reduced state expenditure on social needs and growing unemployment, and called for a decisive change in government policy that was presently under the thumb of Big Business and international finance capital. The number of people taking part in the demonstration was, according to different estimates, from 40,000 to 80,000.² Some 40 trade unions took part in preparing it. It helped to improve solidarity of the left and overcome a certain inertia which, as noted above, was typical of a large part of the union movement after the Labour Party had come to power.

A salient ingredient in the new situation that began to take shape within the labour movement was the striking reinforcement of left-wing trends inside the Labour Party and the unions. That found

¹ "Communist Party of Great Britain, 34th National Congress. November 15-18, 1975. Official Report", in *Comment*, November 29-December 13, 1975, Vol. 13, p. 393.

² *Morning Star*, January 18, 1976.

expression above all in the mounting determination with which the left began to challenge the policy of the right-wing party and union leadership both centrally and locally in 1976 and 1977. The matter was not confined to growing criticism of the Social Contract and the various concrete measures taken by the government. At question were the major programme and political premises of the right wing. For example, the TUC Conference of 1976 adopted a resolution demanding that the TUC General Council work out a "socialist economic and industrial strategy". Among the measures to be included in that strategy were the creation of "an effective national and regional system for planning investment and development involving the trade union movement in all decisions and discussions relating to future legislation..." One of the main clauses of the strategy was the demand for "an extension of public ownership, including the banks and key financial institutions".¹

A new, more determined spirit was apparent, too, at the October 1976 annual Labour Party Conference. Condemning the government's impending cuts in spending on education, health service and other social needs, the Conference simultaneously demanded inclusion in a future Labour government's programme nationalisation of the 4 biggest private banks and 7 insurance companies. The resolution gained 3,314,000 votes against 526,000. Proposals on nationalisation of the leading banks and insurance companies, put forward by the most consistent members of the Labour left and trade union left-wingers, did not gain the necessary majority. Remarkably, the resolution on nationalisation of the banks and insurance companies had been passed at the recommendation of the Labour National Executive that had approved the relevant document in the face of fierce opposition from the Prime Minister and several leading Cabinet members. The Conference also approved by an overwhelming majority the new edition of *Labour's Programme for Britain* (1976) which reflected a whole number of progressive demands from the Party and union left.²

The more radical stance of the Executive showed that shifts in the balance of power between left and right had begun to take on a stable, long-term character. It is interesting that despite right-wing resistance, the Executive by a majority of votes adopted a decision to give full backing to the above-mentioned demonstration on 17 November 1976. The decision called upon local Party organisations to support the workers' action and put pressure on the government to force it to abandon the unpopular measures it was planning.³

¹ *Trades Union Congress Report 1976*, London, 1977, p. 638.

² *Labour's Programme for Britain 1976*, London, 1976.

³ *Morning Star*, October 28, 1976.

Left opposition to government policy strikingly grew from within the Parliamentary Party as well. A major issue that was considerably exacerbating relations between right and left was that of inner-party democracy. Insofar as the facts testified that decisions of the supreme Party forum, the annual conference, were constantly being flouted by the right-wing majority in the Parliamentary Party and the Cabinet, left members centrally and locally began with increasing insistence to pose the question of changing that state of affairs. They proposed that every incumbent Labour Party MP should undergo a re-nomination as his branch constituency's candidate on the eve of the following parliamentary elections. The leadership of a number of local Party branches between 1975 and 1977 resolved not to nominate at the next elections MPs whose behaviour was at variance with Party conference decisions.

Pressure was noticeably building up on the leadership within the trade unions as well. As a result of sharp opposition to the Social Contract from a number of influential trade unions, the TUC right-wing leaders were unable to gain the assent of the union movement to a third stage of the Social Contract with the government (the second stage having ended in June 1977). Instead, the September TUC Conference adopted a resolution on returning to the system of free collective bargaining without any set restrictions on wage rises. Nonetheless, the TUC leadership, despite very strong opposition from a large part of the delegates, was able to include the "12-Months rule" clause in that resolution by which unions could not make demands on wage rises earlier than a year after the previous rise, irrespective of price rises and reductions in real wages during the period of the restrictive practice.¹

The right wing of the unions, the government and the bourgeois press assessed that decision as victory for a milder version of the Social Contract, witness to the "sobriety" and "moderation" of the union movement. However, both the considerable opposition to the decision and a number of other resolutions adopted by the Conference, plus, most importantly, the grass-roots mood, especially at the biggest plants, demonstrated the rapid rise of opposition to the conciliatory policy. A major resolution adopted by the Conference appealed for a far-reaching redistribution of incomes, nationalisation of land earmarked for building, effective control over investment and a halt to capital outflow, establishment of a national planning centre with union participation, effective price control and a substantial reduction in arms expenditure.² Significantly, it was the Communist Ken Gill, member of the TUC General Council, who introduced

¹ *Trades Union Congress Report 1977*, London, 1978, p. 582.

² *Morning Star*, September 8, 1977.

that resolution on behalf of his union. Another Communist, George Guy, as well as several other left-wing union figures, were elected to the new General Council.

The trend towards strengthening left-wing influence in the unions found its expression also in the stepping up of the campaign for detente, international security and co-operation, in support of the democratic and labour forces in other countries. The bringing down of Salvador Allende's government in Chile caused profound concern and brought condemnation from the unions. The Chile Solidarity Campaign, which had some 4.5 million unionists as members in 1975, collected funds to help Chilean democrats in exile and the families of those murdered or languishing in Chilean gaols.¹ The unions demanded that the government break off trade relations with Pinochet.

The British labour movement was putting pressure on ruling circles for a constructive resolution to the Northern Ireland problem. It protested at the policy of Margaret Thatcher's Cabinet whose coming to power heralded the strengthening of the regime of violence in Ulster and more brutal methods of combating the protest movement. The left wing of the Labour Party and unions, as well as the Communist Party, demand an end to terror and repression and the focusing of efforts on urgent socio-economic and political problems of the province. As the Communist Party put it in its programme, "the British Government should recognise the right of the majority of the people of Ireland to rule the whole of their country, and should co-operate with their representatives in bringing this about by consent. These policies would lay the basis for a new relationship of co-operation between the peoples of Ireland and Britain".²

In the latter part of the 70s the mounting activity of right-wing extremist racist organisations, including the National Front, caused alarm in the labour movement. Opposing all forms of racism and racial discrimination, the trade unions established contact with committees on race relations and with local anti-racist organisations. Many unions contributed to funds of the Anti-Nazi League, to organising anti-racist rallies and carnivals in London. The first union conference called to assist promotion of anti-racist activity in the union movement at all levels, especially at the workplace, was held at the end of 1978. At the same time many important decisions adopted at industrial union and TUC conferences in support of peace and disarmament and of democratic forces abroad have not been backed up by real actions.

British Communists worked hard to politicise the union move-

¹ *Trades Union Congress Report 1975*, London, 1975, p. 498.

² *The British Road to Socialism*, London, 1978, p. 43.

ment, to raise the class awareness of the workers. A new edition of the Party's programme, *The British Road to Socialism*, adopted by the 35th Congress in November 1977, proceeds from the need to set up "a broad democratic alliance" at the centre of which should be the labour movement taking consistently left positions, which can "transform Britain".¹ The programme stresses that only popular activity in all its forms and manifestations is capable of bringing success; it gives a detailed analysis of the nature of the overriding directions of the workers' struggle and the tasks of Communists taking part in that struggle.²

Despite all the attempts by right-wing leaders of the Labour Party and unions to damp down the rising wave of discontent among the workers, to incline them to various forms of class collaboration, the social contradictions in the country continued to intensify. The trade-union conferences held in 1978 vigorously condemned any versions of the Social Contract. Reflecting the mood of wide sections of rank-and-file unionists and the whole working class, the TUC Conference of September 1978 rejected the Social Contract by an overwhelming majority and advocated a return to the system of free collective bargaining without strings.³

True, the Labour government headed by James Callaghan continued even then to try to impose upon the unions, without resorting to special legislation, wage curbs of 5 per cent (which, bearing in mind the roughly 10 per cent increase in retail prices would have meant an appreciable reduction in real wages). Despite the pressure put on the unions, most of them made demands considerably exceeding the government-set norm. That led to a new exacerbation of the socio-political situation and a sharp rise in strike activity. Most unions stood firm and, as a rule, came out winners. As a result, wage rises for most workers were 2-3 times the government-set limit.

The lower paid in the services sphere were the major participants in the strike campaign that broke out from the autumn of 1978 and reached its peak in the winter months of 1979. Exploiting the fact that break-downs in work in that area do create considerable discomfort to the public, the bourgeois press whipped up a hysterical campaign against the unions, accusing them of all the economy's ills and of the country's dire straits generally. The Labour government was branded as "spineless", unable to cope with the situation, and being under the thumb of the strikers and unions.

The 1979 winter of discontent led to a sharp worsening of both

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 29-33.

³ *Trades Union Congress Report 1978*, London, 1979, pp. 549-60.

social and political contradictions. It reinforced an urge by conservative circles and the monopoly bourgeoisie to try other, firmer methods of political rule, to bring about a general election. Against that the Labour Party leaders attempted to conclude a new Social Contract-type agreement with the unions and then, in April, were defeated in parliament and had to call a new election; they took up a very defensive stance doing all they could to advertise their moderation and pragmatism.

The Communist Party and the militant forces in the unions and democratic movement waged a persistent struggle on the social, political and ideological plane. They endeavoured firmly to rebuff the offensive strategy and tactics of the Conservatives, to put forward a fighting programme based on the real interests and aspirations of the people, to bolster the vigorous actions of the working class in the economic sphere with similar actions in the political arena. The pre-election Party Manifesto contained a list of specific demands and measures in all the major areas of national life.¹ Many of the Party's proposals coincided with the demands made by other left forces in the labour movement, particularly the Labour and trade-union left.

However, the lack of unity in the workers' political forces, coupled with the inconsistency of the Labour left, hampered the labour movement from acting as a united and effective political force and diminished the importance of initiatives coming from Communists.

After the defeat of the Labour Party at the May 1979 election a fundamentally new situation arose in the labour movement. The new Conservative government of Margaret Thatcher launched a broad attack on the workers' socio-economic gains and the rights of worker organisations. The Tory Cabinet drew up and started to implement plans drastically to reduce state expenditure on social needs. State intervention in economic affairs was reduced to a minimum, all price control was removed—these were the main factors in the sharp rise in the inflation level. From September 1978 to May 1979 retail prices grew by 7.8 per cent, whereas between May 1979 and September 1980 they grew by 25.2 per cent.²

In trying to weaken the workers' ability to resist, the government deliberately stimulated unemployment—from 1,300,000 to 2,041,000 between May 1979 and September 1980.³ In line with their anti-union strategy, the Conservatives in early 1980 introduced an employment bill in parliament, which sharply reduced the possibility of picketing and solidarity actions with strikers, removed or greatly restricted a number of other union rights. At the same

¹ *Morning Star*, April 11, 1979.

² *Monthly Digest of Statistics*, London, October 1980, p. 154.

³ *Ibid.*

time, the government was trying to shift the axis of domestic politics to the right, to tighten up "law and order".

The British working class was now faced first and foremost with the task of organising resistance to the frontal assault by the ruling class and government on its vital rights and interests. The burden of direct struggle against the government policy lay mainly on the unions. The TUC Conference of September 1979 unanimously and roundly condemned the Tory Cabinet plans to introduce a new anti-union legislation and cut social expenditure; it called on the TUC General Council to launch an extensive campaign to counteract those Tory objectives. The Conference spoke up for renationalising without compensation those parts of the state sector that the government was turning over to private capital.

The intransigent anti-union policy of the Conservatives, growth in popular militancy over economic issues and growing pressure from grass-roots unionists prompted the TUC leadership, in which a majority of moderates remained, to take more determined steps, to organise several mass political actions. The peak of the TUC campaign in defence of workers' socio-economic interests and trade-union rights was the nationwide "day of action" on May 14, 1980 when in various parts of the country over a million trade union members took part in strikes, marches and protest rallies.

However, the situation in the union movement after the Tories came to power was rather complex. A whole number of weaknesses and negative tendencies that had come to the surface during the last Labour government were not yet overcome. That was clear both from the compromise outcome to the big national strikes by engineers and steel workers, the fear of resolute fight against mass redundancies and the persecution of shop stewards shown at some factories, the narrow-group orientations that came to life in some places, and the smaller response than expected by trade unionists to the call for action on May 14. Efforts by left-wing grass-roots union activists to mobilise rank-and-file members to fight against the anti-union government measures were less effective than they had been against the Heath Cabinet policy. In such circumstances grounds exist for the right-wingers among the leadership of several large unions to maintain their influence and sometimes to extend it.

The contradictory nature of the trends in the union movement has an effect on the situation, too, within the Labour Party, upon the rivalry between its left and right wing. The results have acquired particular significance since, with the general political and ideological attack by the ruling class, the labour movement is especially in need of a determined and effective ideological-political leadership capable of channeling spontaneous mass discontent into the mainstream of a purposeful, offensive political struggle.

Immediately after the defeat in the May 1979 elections, the left wing of the Labour Party seized the initiative and, relying on the militant spirit of many local branches, with the right-wing parliamentary leadership discredited in the eyes of rank-and-file Labour supporters, launched a fight for a profound change in the Party's balance of power. The question of democratising the Party, securing the predominant influence of the "mass Party" (in particular its supreme bodies—the annual conference and the National Executive) on the policy of the parliamentary Party and Labour government in the event of it coming to power, was at the centre of that contention. Without it, even the formal adoption by the Party of radical demands and policies was no guarantee of their implementation.

The 1979 Party Conference marked a striking success for the left. Of the three main proposals it put forward (selection and confirmation of candidates by constituency branches prior to each election; transfer of ultimate ratification of the Party's election manifesto to the National Executive—where the left had a majority; and transfer of the functions of selecting Party leader from the parliamentary Party to a representative college of voters) the Conference approved the first two.¹ The radical mood of delegates was also reflected in other decisions of the Conference. It underlined that the main reason for the Party's defeat at the polls was that the government had not carried out Party decisions, and it obliged the Executive to draw up a programme for a future government aimed at "the socialist transformation of society".²

In making every possible effort to halt the Party's drift to the left, right-wing leaders sharply stepped up their exertions within the union movement, endeavouring to resurrect the right bloc within the Party and trade unions that had more than once successfully withstood pressure from the left in the past. But their efforts did not bring the expected result. Quite a substantial part in foiling those attempts was played by organisations like the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy and the Labour Management Committee of LP. The Tribune group also stepped up its work; many of its members began to work outside the bounds of parliament with increasing determination.

Mounting discontent with the Tory foreign and, particularly, military policy objectively helped to strengthen the positions of the left. The movement against deployment of US medium-range missiles on British territory and for renunciation of nuclear weapons generally, in which left-wing Labour and Communist Party members

¹ *Morning Star*, October 3, 4, 1979.

² *Morning Star*, October 4, 5, 1979.

took an active part, began to have ever wider scope. Demands for Britain's withdrawal from the Common Market, becoming more and more widespread, had a similar effect on the balance of power in the Party.

The right wing found it all the more difficult to carry out its plans because differences grew within its own ranks and a group of leading figures, including former Cabinet members like Shirley Williams, William Rodgers and David Owen, threatened withdrawal from the Party unless the next conference reversed the 1979 decisions or intensified opposition to Britain's membership of the EEC even more.

The 1980 Conference went even further than the previous one on a whole range of questions. It not only reaffirmed the previous decision on compulsory reselection of all MPs by Party branches in local constituencies, but also passed (by 3.8 million to 3.3 million votes) the resolution, rejected in 1979, on depriving the parliamentary Party of monopoly rights in selecting the Party leader and on setting up a wider "electoral college" of representatives of local Party branches. Only a slim majority of votes prevented the left from reaffirming the previous Conference decision to have the National Executive possess the major responsibility for compiling and ratifying the election manifesto; it lost the resolution by 3.5 million to 3.6 million votes.

The left succeeded in having the Conference adopt two fundamental resolutions on foreign policy and military-political issues. The first underlined the need for the next election manifesto to contain demands for the country's withdrawal from the Common Market and to promote peaceful relations with all the states of Europe and other continents. The second called for rejection of deployment of US medium-range missiles in Britain and of purchasing Trident from the Americans as replacement for the outmoded Polaris on nuclear submarines, and for rejection of nuclear weapons and the nuclear strategy in general.

Despite the importance of those changes, the left did not succeed in bringing about any decisive shift in the balance of power within the Party. Its insufficiently strong positions within the trade-union movement, even though the influence of left-wing Labour Party people had grown in it, remained its weakness. Thus, while by the summer of 1980 Party constituency branches had backed the left-proposed resolutions restricting the Parliamentary Party's autonomy by about 20 : 1, it was 1 : 1 by the trade unions.¹

Nonetheless, the 1980 Conference was a substantial victory for the left. The British Communist journal *Marxism Today* described

¹ *Marxism Today*, London, December 1980, p. 9.

the outcome of the Conference as "a qualitative advance for the Left".¹ The Conference also demonstrated the inability of the top leadership and especially the then leader to normalise the situation inside the Labour movement by imposing on the entire Party the ideas of the right wing and thereby ensuring at least the appearance of unity within its ranks.

Elections for a new Party leader took place in October 1980, and Michael Foot, backed by the centre and left, beat the right-wing candidate Denis Healey.

After a special Party Conference on 24 January 1981 ratified the left-proposed composition of an electoral college for the leader's election (40 per cent of the vote going to the unions, 30 per cent to the Parliamentary Party and 30 per cent to local Party constituency branches), members of the extreme right resigned from the Party and founded a new, Social Democratic Party in late March. That Party made known its intention of fighting in the elections in an alliance with the Liberals, thereby creating an influential centrist force in British politics.

The complexity of the situation within the labour movement is not confined to the insufficiently strong positions of the Labour left within the Party and among the population generally; there is also a certain lack of unity among the left. Co-operation of the Labour left with Communists and militant radical forces in the unions and other mass organisations and movements remains limited, which is bound to affect the results of the struggle.

The 36th Congress of the Communist Party of Great Britain took place in November 1979. It defined the main task confronting the labour movement in the late 70s as cutting short the rightward shift in national politics taking place after the Tories had come to power. It all would depend, stressed Gordon McLennan, the General Secretary, on how successfully the labour movement could set the millions of people in action, raise them to struggle against Tory policy, and defeat the ideological onslaught through which the Conservatives were trying to justify their reactionary policy.²

THE WEST GERMAN LABOUR MOVEMENT IN THE "SMALL COALITION" PERIOD

In contrast to Britain, the period of government office of the Social Democratic Party (SPD) in Federal Germany was longer and its results more significant, particularly in foreign policy. Behind those facts was an important tendency typical of other countries as well—

¹ *Comment*, Nos. 24-25, 1979, Vol. 17, p. 387.

² *Ibid.*, p. 6.

though confined by the bounds of the capitalist system, a certain growing influence of the working class on politics, including the foreign policy of the state. The West German example shows that even where popular discontent is not yet so wide and all-embracing, where it is only against one, though very important, aspect of the ruling-class policy (foreign policy, for example), nonetheless fresh opportunities open up for invigorating the labour movement, reinforcing its impact on state policy.

For a long time the West German working class actually had no possibility of affecting government. That was due both to the ban on the German Communist Party (DKP) and the actual renunciation by the Social Democrats in the early part of the 1960s of their own foreign policy different from that of the Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union (CDU/CSU), their swift conversion into a "national" party with a programme of neocapitalist reformism in domestic policy, and the low level of mass struggle (in 1961 each West German worker accounted for an average of 4.7 minutes of strike participation by contrast with 7 hours by the US worker, 4.5 hours by the French and 3 hours by the British).¹ Isolation of the working class from active intervention in national issues led to the domination of reactionary tendencies in state policy reflecting the narrow-group interests of the most conservative quarters of the monopoly bourgeoisie, and prevented the country from escaping from the foreign policy dead end into which the dominant revenge-seeking dogmas of the Adenauer period had taken it. Unresolved questions began to accumulate and conflicts were emerging that were certain to bring the labour movement to life.

Attempts to find a compromise policy in tackling the urgent tasks and, at the same time, to expand the regime's mass base led to the establishment on 1 December 1966 of the "big coalition"—the government formed on the co-operation of the CDU/CSU with the Social Democratic Party. But the founding of the coalition not only failed to bring back the former stability, but even caused a worsening of internal politics during the economic decline of 1966-1967, stimulating the process of socio-political differentiation and polarisation. The 1966-1967 slump undermined popular confidence in the advantages of the market economy. The SPD assent to "emergency legislation" in 1968, involving the possible sharp restriction of democratic rights the introduction of an incomes policy and cuts in expenditures on social needs, combined with the practical disappearance of a parliamentary opposition that could channel mounting discontent into the mainstream of inter-party struggle, all led to fermenting discontent among Social Democrats, friction between

¹ *Stern*, No. 47, November 1963, p. 91.

the SPD and the unions, and the emergence of an extra-parliamentary opposition. The growth of the neo-Nazi National Democratic Party (NPD) also alarmed all democrats and the public at large.

During the "big coalition" period (1966-1969) the danger grew of the working class becoming integrated into the state-monopoly capitalist system. But, at the same time, a diametrically-opposed tendency began to develop: a campaign by advanced elements of the working class for its political independence, for elaboration of an independent stand on home and foreign policy.

Legalisation of the communist movement has to be put down as a great success for the labour and democratic forces. In underground conditions the German Communist Party (DKP) maintained its organisational structure and had illegally published up to 300 newspapers in the early 1960s. The ban on the Party became an anachronism, and discussion of legalising Communist activity flared up between 1965 and 1966 in the unions and newspapers. On September 26, 1968 the Party was reconstituted on a new basis as the legal German Communist Party (DKP) and, in April 1969, held its first congress. By 1970 the Party had 30,000 members and by 1978 the number had grown to 46,480.¹ The Party called on workers to fight for the democratic renovation of the state and society, and declared itself ready to work to that end with all anti-monopoly forces within the unions and the extra-parliamentary opposition.

The students constituted a mass basis of the extra-parliamentary opposition; in 1967 and 1968 they launched a vigorous campaign against war and the imperialist policy in Vietnam (300,000 people took part in the 1968 Easter March) and particularly for educational reform—having specifically in mind wide access to universities by young people from worker backgrounds. For the first time in many years the streets of major West German cities were the arena of demonstrations and skirmishes. Despite the obvious weaknesses of the student movement (the influence of ultra-left ideas, the underestimation of the problem of forming an alliance with the working class), it did play a big part in overcoming political stagnation, in drawing fresh groups and strata of the population into the struggle against the existing system.

Discontent also penetrated the ranks of the SPD and the Trade Union Federation (DGB). At the Nuremberg Congress of Social Democrats in 1968, 70 delegates out of the 300 represented the left opposition. The SPD leadership's policy in government came under withering attack. During discussion of emergency laws, calls came from among the working class for a national strike, which

¹ *Protokoll des Mannheimer Parteitags der Deutschen Kommunistischen Partei. 20-22 Oktober 1978, Neuss, 1979, p. 26.*

were, however, rejected by the DGB right-wing leaders. Yet changes did take place in the official DGB position. The unions less and less willingly allowed themselves to be bound by the terms of "concerted action"—agreements with the employers and the government on guidelines for wage and price rises.

A change of climate also came from the wild-cat strikes that broke out in September 1969 with some 140,000 steel and metal workers, miners and public service workers taking part. There arose "a new socio-psychological situation; the politicisation of workers has grown thanks to the victory, and their self-awareness and confidence in their own strength have become stronger".¹

The formation in the autumn of 1969 of the "small coalition" government of Social Democrats and Free Democrats, although not a direct result of the working-class struggle (as the Labour Party had taken office in Britain in early 1974) did occur under pressure of the new situation that had arisen through the mounting action by advanced sections of the working class and other strata. At the same time, more favourable conditions were created for popular pressure on the government.

The shift in foreign policy from the Cold War dogmas to recognition of post-war realities and a goodneighbourly policy towards the socialist states naturally became the main trump card of the new administration. That shift rested on a clear change in the popular mood.

The working class played an active part in campaigning for a new foreign policy. When the threat arose in April 1972 of the parliamentary debate of the *Ostpolitik* leading to the downfall of Brandt's government, workers in many cities organised strikes and demonstrations and foiled the opposition's plans. At the elections in November that year the SPD gained the votes of many Catholic workers who had earlier voted for the CDU/CSU.²

However, while in foreign policy the Social Democrats, despite certain wavering and vestiges of earlier policy, were able, with popular support, to implement their declared programme, it was in many respects another matter with their domestic reforms and their promises of "more democracy and more participation" in all spheres of social and political affairs that they had given when fighting for power. Of course, the government in which the Social Democrats played the leading role could not allow itself to ignore the demands of the public who made up the principal core of SPD voters. That to a certain extent told on its social measures (reduc-

¹ *Gewerkschaftliche Monatshefte*, Cologne, No. 11, November 1969, p. 644.

² Heinz Timmermann, "Le carte di Brandt", *Rinascita*, April 19, 1974, pp. 15-16.

ing pensionable age and raising the minimum pension level, limiting rent rises and enhancing protection of tenants from eviction, granting factory councils the right of vote in investment issues, introducing tax reform and certain other measures).

Yet it very soon became clear that the framework of capitalist society was creating immense difficulties for implementing the promised reforms. It was not so much and not only the SPD's partner in the coalition, the Free Democrats relying on a certain part of the bourgeoisie and intermediate strata, as big capital itself that had effective means to resist the promised reforms, resistance that the SPD leaders had no intention of fighting vigorously. Reforms in taxation, health service, education and house-building were greatly held up, and the reforms themselves took on very much an inconsistent form. For example, the setting up of a uniform school was delayed as a result of CDU/CSU resistance in the lands where it held a majority. Yet, uniform schools did not establish equality of opportunity just the same. Differentiation of pupils by "ability" was actually discrimination against girls and boys from a less privileged background. In many instances the government measures on housing did not have a proper effect because land speculation leading to rent rises continued to flourish in the cities. Vocational training remained extremely unsatisfactory and there was an acute shortage of apprenticeships at enterprises. Contributions to sickness insurance constantly rose.

The unresolved social issues caused a number of demonstrations, rallies and sit-in strikes. Some cities witnessed squatters taking over empty apartments and houses. But the main thing was that the failure to implement pre-election promises on social reforms took the wind out of the sails of appeals by SPD and union leaders to the working class to show restraint in their call for higher wages. The working class received no serious compensation for its contribution to securing economic upsurge. The government headed by the Social Democrats could not get from entrepreneurs similar restraint in the area of prices, and the modest wage rise was considerably eaten up by the increase in prices.

In 1974 West Germany entered a period of economic crisis which for the first time in many years produced mass unemployment and even more exacerbated all social contradictions. In January 1975 the country had 1,154,000 people out of work and another 900,000 transferred to short time. The jobless comprised 5.1 per cent of the able-bodied population. Such a level of unemployment had not existed since 1958. The number of people on a shorter working day was the highest in West German history.¹ Unemployment was

¹ *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, February 8, 1975, p. 1.

particularly high among women, young people and foreign workers.

The crisis led to growing economic and political pressure by monopoly capital, the bourgeois parties and the government on the working class and its organisations. In turn the working class, trade unions, students and all working strata in the country energetically acted to protect their interests. Powerful strikes and demonstrations swept the country.

In the years to come the continuing high unemployment level and the general decline in workers' condition caused an even greater rise in the strike campaign. In the spring of 1976, during talks on raising wage ratings, some 400,000 metalworkers took part in pre-emptive strikes. Between February and March 1978, a strike of printing-workers, the largest in West German history, took place, aimed against the abolition of jobs resulting from capitalist rationalisation. Between March and April the same year a series of strikes took place in one of the country's major industrial regions, north Baden-Württemberg, with more than 100,000 engineering, auto, electrical and machine-tool workers demonstrating for retention of jobs and higher wages to match price rises. As during the printing-workers' strike, the employers resorted to a mass lock-out, sacking almost 200,000 workers at large factories. The metalworkers' strike assumed national dimensions. In 1978 yet another national strike occurred—that of West German dockers which turned out to be the biggest strike in a quarter of a century.

Between November 1978 and January 1979 there was a 44-day strike of 70,000 steel workers. They were campaigning for wage rises, a shorter working day and an increase in holidays. Those employed in the services sphere became increasingly drawn into the strike struggle. Workers at public utilities enterprises, in the state aircraft company, teachers and young apprentices in banking and credit held brief but impressive pre-emptive strikes in 1979 and 1980. The campaign to raise wages and maintain employment was increasingly being linked to social demands: extending holidays, widening and democratising vocational training, etc. The process of signing rating agreements was more and more acquiring an acute character; in the course of it the unions were making social demands and not hiding their readiness to resort to strike action.

Problems of democratic reforms, primarily the fight for participation in management, continued to play an important part in the class disputes. The participation slogan showed the workers' eagerness to enhance their role in the economy, the state and society. Here the unions took more radical positions than parties in the government majority. The Trade Union Federation demanded equitable distribution of seats between the owners and workers' representatives in the observation councils in concerns and rejected the

granting of seats to "leading personnel" (managers) at the expense of "job-holders" as had been envisaged by the act passed in the spring of 1976. But the fight for participation was mainly confined to demands at trade-union congresses, rallies and in parliament. There was no organised mass movement of the working class in support of effective participation that could have limited the powers of the monopolies.

The workers' fight for socio-economic demands increasingly stimulated the unions to take action in defence of political democracy, against the influence of right-wing conservative and militarist forces, which found expression in the draft DGB programme adopted in the autumn of 1979, and in resolutions of congresses of industrial unions in 1980, calling on the federal government to do everything it could to continue the policy of detente and arms limitation.¹

Workers' actions on political issues were still fairly disunited and haphazard. But they frequently were supported by intellectuals and white-collar workers. The anti-lock-out campaign held by the unions in 1980 was typical in that respect. And in the spring and summer of 1980 many thousands of blue- and white-collar workers took part in demonstrations against the growing right-wing danger and militarism held in Bremen, Hannover, Munich, Frankfurt am Main and elsewhere.

The worsening of the economic situation, the growth in unemployment and exacerbation of social problems weakened support that the government had received from the public in the early 70s, and led to SPD defeat in elections in several lands between the spring of 1974 and spring 1976. The losses among the worker electorate were mainly due to the SPD's half-hearted domestic policy. And the Party suffered certain losses in the Bundestag elections of October 3, 1976, which, however, did not prevent it from maintaining the government coalition with the Free Democrats.

While economic difficulties and failures at the 1974-1976 elections were a pretext for the SPD right wing to launch a fresh campaign for actual capitulation to the forces of capitalism, the left wing of the Party and unions stepped up the fight to surmount the difficulties by making democratic changes. The Young Socialists was the principal core of the left within the SPD. Despite the inconsistency and anti-communist prejudices inherent in the left Social Democrats, they were fighting energetically for giving SPD policy a class character, for anti-monopoly measures, including nationalisation of the main means of production. The anti-monopoly demands also found sympathy with the left wing of the DGB. At the same time, workers' disenchantment with SPD policy caused a certain

¹ *Gewerkschaftliche Monatshefte*, No. 3, March 1980, p. 209; *Marxistische Blätter*, No. 6, November-December 1980, pp. 88-89.

weakening of ties between the DGB and the SPD which was fraught with a serious danger for the latter.

The SPD leadership tried to play down the left criticism and simultaneously to calm conservative groups. For this purpose it not merely gave a sharp rebuke to internal opposition, but also retained anti-communism in Party policy: reaffirming the ban on co-operation by SPD members with Communists and expelling several violators of the discriminatory practice, legalising in October 1975 the discriminatory ban on employing in public service members of "anti-constitutional" parties and organisations—by which Communists were meant first and foremost (the notorious *Berufsverbot*).

Such actions caused considerable discontent both among ordinary Party members and among wide sections of the public. The active counteraction by progressive forces to the ruling circles' harsher home policy, the desire to safeguard democratic and political rights of workers found reflection, particularly, in the founding of the organised anti-*Berufsverbot* movement which united in excess of 350 local and regional protest groups.¹

Demands to safeguard peace and continue the policy of detente had paramount importance at the end of the 1970s. The direct cause of the mounting campaign by West German workers in that area from late 1979 was the agreement by the West German government to NATO plans to station 572 US nuclear Pershing-II and medium-range cruise missiles in Western Europe, of which 204 would be deployed in West Germany. Employing traditional methods of scaring the public with the alleged Soviet threat and stressing "Atlantic solidarity", referring at the same time to the "enforced need" for that step at a time when the pre-election struggle with the Christian Democrat opposition was acute, the SPD leadership gained backing for the decision at the Party Congress in December 1979. That by no means signified, however, an end to in-fighting on that issue. On the contrary, the Congress decision served to activate forces working to defend a realistic policy by Social Democrats that in the early 70s had facilitated a change from the Cold War to detente. The country's trade unions made no bones about their feelings. "There is no alternative to the detente policy that the DGB has upheld from the very outset," said the message addressed by the union federation to Bundestag parties in connection with the impending 1980 federal election.²

The left Social Democratic youth similarly spoke out in favour of the policy of detente and strategic arms limitation in Western Europe. The peace and democracy theme determined the main orientation of the Young Socialists' Congress that took place in late

¹ *Unsere Zeit*, June 10, 1980, p. 1.

² *Unsere Zeit*, April 1, 1980, p. 1.

May and early June 1980 in Hannover.¹ On the eve of its opening a mass youth demonstration took place on the initiative of Young Socialists in Cologne; the participants condemned the NATO decision to manufacture and deploy new US medium-range missiles in several parts of Western Europe, and demanded a revision of the West German National Olympic Committee's decision to boycott the Moscow Olympics. The organisation's leaflets distributed on Cologne's central streets said that the Young Socialists resolutely demanded from the leadership of their Party heading the West German government to put an end to the arms race and give more aid to the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America. Young Social Democrats were condemning the policy of boycotts pursued by US ruling groups against the socialist countries and declared their determination to fight to continue West German *Ostpolitik*, to extend relations between East and West and to strengthen contacts with young people abroad.

As many as 50,000 people took part in the demonstrations organised in late 1979 and early 1980 by activists of the West German peace movement. In such centres as Hannover, Mannheim and Munich "peace weeks" and demonstrations were held in which unionists, Social Democrats, Communists and members of various religious and democratic organisations came together under the slogan "End the Arms Race and Continue Detente". The anti-militarist sentiments of the broad public were expressed so vigorously that they simply had to be taken note of in the headquarters of the leading political parties. At the SPD Congress held in Essen in June 1980, Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, a deputy chairman of the Party, noted that most West German citizens were supporting a policy aimed at easing tension and consolidating peace. In his key-note speech he spoke in favour of continuing the detente policy and described limitation or reduction in armed forces and arms between East and West as a major task of international politics.² That realistic course ensured him victory over the opposition candidate Franz Josef Strauss at the 1980 election. But after the election militarist tendencies increased in government policy. Running into mounting protest, including within his own Party, Schmidt even threatened to resign if the next SPD Congress were to oppose the NATO missile option.

No small contribution was made by West German Communists in working out strategic issues of the campaign for peace and defence and extension of democracy.

The brief span of the Communist Party's legal existence, and the

¹ *Vorwärts*, No. 24, June 5, 1980, p. 8.

² *Wahlparteitag der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands*, Am 9/10 Juni 1980, Bonn, 1980, pp. 50-64.

anti-communism ensconced in the Cold War years within most diverse groups, including the SPD, created serious difficulties for Communist activity. In overcoming them, West German Communists worked doggedly to use the favourable conditions that had arisen as a result of the defeat suffered between 1969 and 1972 by reactionary forces, so as to step up popular pressure on the "small coalition" government and to resolve socio-political issues in an anti-monopoly spirit.

The Communists adopted constructive tactics in regard to the SPD-FDP government, supporting measures taken under popular pressure, and vigorously opposing steps to curb social progress and the detente process in international relations.¹ They criticised the inconsistency of the "small coalition" government yielding to pressure from right-wing conservative forces and NATO militarist circles.²

Orientation on campaigning for a united anti-monopoly front capable of implementing profound democratic change in society was consolidated in the new Party programme adopted by the Mannheim Congress in October 1978. The programme provided a substantiation of the Party's strategy of campaigning for anti-monopoly democracy. In the course of that struggle, the Party felt, while capitalist relations would stay for a certain time, elements of socialism would take shape; the balance of power would gradually change in favour of the new society. The DKP "regards the anti-monopoly and socialist stages in the revolutionary struggle as interconnected stages of a coherent process of transition from capitalism to socialism."³

The Party concentrated on involving the mass of working people in the direct political struggle. In that connection Communists supported and furthered various forms of democratic popular activity, such as trade-union struggle for participation in management, the developing local movements of civil initiative aimed against monopoly abuses and bureaucratic heavy-handedness, the actions by youth and student organisations to meet their specific demands, democratise education and science, etc. The Party tried to show workers that implementation of their demands could only occur in practice with a curbing of monopoly powers and undermining of their economic and political power.

An important element in mass Party work was its participation in the elections to parliament, to state and local council bodies. The Party attained significant successes at some elections. Communists gained seats in local councils in such big cities as Nuremberg, Fürth,

¹ *Marxistische Blätter*, No. 6, November-December 1973, p. 10.

² *Ibid.*, No. 4, July-August 1980, pp. 11-17.

³ Hermann Gautier, "The Goals Are Set", *World Marxist Review*, No. 2, 1979, p. 47.

Oldenburg, Marburg, Göttingen, Mannheim and Bottrop in the late 1970s.

During the 1970s there were no few reassuring examples of successful co-operation between Communists and other progressive and democratic forces. Communist positions became stronger within the unions: Communists created 300 factory groups publishing more than 400 newspapers and had 800 of their representatives in factory councils. The Party influence on the union youth organisations, accounting for more than 1.2 million young workers, was particularly strong. Taking account of the popular mood, even some officials of the DGB spoke out against anti-Communism.

Contacts were established between Communists and democratic movements. Suffice it to name the mass actions against building an atomic power station at Wuhle that threatened to pollute the environment, or the demonstration in Frankfurt am Main to commemorate 30 years of liberation from fascism, in which 40,000 people—Communists, Social Democrats, Christians, trade union members and Resistance fighters—took part. Communists took an active part in the solidarity committees in the campaign against *Berufsverbot*, in the anti-Strauss movement committees and in the movement for detente and disarmament.

By their work, West German Communists encouraged a growth in democratic awareness and popular political activity and helped to isolate and discredit extreme right-wing militarist and ultra-left groupings.

The active participation in campaigns against reactionaries, above all on foreign policy issues, brought the working-class struggle to a higher level opening up new opportunities. At the same time it brought to light the shortcomings in its mass organisations under Social Democratic influence, the inadequate level of political consciousness among many workers. The course of events, particularly the economic crisis, set the task of surmounting those deficiencies.

THE US LABOUR MOVEMENT DURING THE SOCIO-POLITICAL CRISIS

By contrast with several West European states where the working class and its parties played the major role in the socio-political upheavals at the end of the 60s and start of the 70s, in the USA where the labour movement was, for historical reasons, lagging behind, lacked independent political action, and was dominated by trade-unionist and, ultimately, bourgeois ideology, the working class was unable to take its proper place in that struggle. That was bound to have its effect on the development and results of the drawn-out socio-political crisis caused by the collapse of the many years of

aggressive foreign policy by the ruling circles, the defeats of US imperialism in Vietnam, the explosion of a Black liberation struggle, a radicalisation of student masses and the appearance of cracks in the very superstructure of American capitalism.

The crisis in US imperialist home and foreign policy, the substantial aggravation of the entire set of economic and socio-political problems presented new demands on the labour movement. Once again the problem of establishing a mass progressive political force based primarily on the labour movement, capable of uniting all supporters of the country's democratic renewal and filling a certain vacuum on the left of social life, became urgent.

The principal obstacle in the way of such a force was the solid position members of conservative political tendencies occupied within the labour movement. The American working class did not take the lead in the mass political actions of progressive forces.

A paramount factor in US domestic politics in the late 60s and early 70s was the anti-war movement that forced Washington first to go to peace talks, and then fully to withdraw troops from Indochina. Part of the workers and some influential unions were actively involved in the movement, but the reactionary stance of AFL-CIO leadership prevented that participation from being general. Some elements that were part of the working class or acting on its behalf at that time joined the "silent majority" on which conservative politicians and frenzied opponents of progressives relied. In 1970, New York construction workers, the so-called hard caps, held demonstrations in support of the aggressive policy in Indochina and beat up its student opponents. The AFL-CIO hierarchy with Meany at the head not only gave unequivocal support to intervention in Vietnam but vigorously opposed detente and the establishment of peaceful coexistence between the USSR and USA. At the AFL-CIO 11th Convention in October 1975, the right-wing leadership succeeded relatively easily in getting delegates to accept a draft resolution condemning the results of the Helsinki European Security and Cooperation Conference. By reaffirming their policy of fierce resistance to detente at the 13th Convention in November 1979,¹ the right-wing union leaders found themselves in the camp of the most dogged and consistent foes of improving the international climate and promoting economic and cultural relations between socialist and capitalist states.

At the same time, during the 1970s the monolithic stance of the US union movement on foreign policy issues was markedly shaken. Not only at the grass roots but in the hierarchy of union leadership there was a growing number of advocates of detente, strategic arms

¹ *AFL-CIO News*, November 17, 1979.

limitation and the establishment of contacts with the socialist countries, including between union organisations. It is noteworthy that the 12th AFL-CIO Convention in December 1977 debated a resolution condemning the manufacture of the neutron bomb, while in the summer of 1979 the Federation Executive spoke up in support of the SALT-2 Agreement.¹

A typical feature of the labour movement in this period, along with the growing strike struggle, the expanding range of its participants and the scope of demands, was the growing opposition to the reactionary union bureaucracy among rank-and-file members. Workers were increasingly opposed to the conciliatory methods conservative union bosses used to settle labour disputes, rejected their calls for moderation and demanded more democracy within the movement.

The US Communist Party stressed that the movement of rank-and-file unionists was of paramount importance for promoting both the labour movement and all aspects of the democratic struggle. The Party noted with satisfaction that Communists had become a significant force in most groups of grass-roots union members.²

In the early 1970s rank-and-file members of some unions—truck drivers, chemical and communications workers, etc.—forced a revision of collective agreements concluded earlier by their union leaders. As B. J. Widick, an eminent specialist on the contemporary trade-union movement, wrote in 1971, "Employees in the 1970s are ... even less willing to conform to rules or be amenable to higher authority. . . . For many, the traditional motivations of job security, money rewards, and opportunity for personal advancement are proving insufficient."³

This activation of grass-roots unionists is bound up with the new mood brought into the working class by a new generation of workers. Many of them differ considerably from workers of an earlier generation in level of education. Having gone through high school or college they take a particularly dim view of the working conditions typical of the capitalist enterprise, the monotony and meaninglessness of work operations, the lack of independence in the work process and the impossibility of creative self-expression. Material compensation for alienation at work satisfies young workers much less. The demands associated with the concept of a better quality of life at work are having an increasingly prime place.

The strike by 10,000 workers at General Motors in Lordstown in

¹ *AFL-CIO 12th Constitutional Convention 1977*, Vol. 1, Washington, 1978, p. 21.

² Gus Hall, "On Mass Movements", *Political Affairs*, No. 1, Vol. 54, 1975, p. 8.

³ B. J. Widick, "Labor's New Style", *The Nation*, March 22, 1979, p. 358.

January 1972 was certainly an unequivocal manifestation of the mounting militant mood among young workers.

An unwillingness by rank-and-file members to follow in the wake of the union hierarchy's conciliatory policy was most clearly apparent in the unprecedented scope of wild-cat strikes in the 1970s that were most widespread in the coal-mining industry. The longest and most mass wild-cat strike in the history of the miners' union was held at the end of 1977 and the beginning of 1978 when after 16 weeks of struggle 160,000 miners won a big pay rise and foiled the harsh sanctions against wild-cat strikes in spite of presidential intervention and the threat of sending troops into the mines.

The wave of actions by grass-roots unionists to replace union leaders led to a certain renewal and rejuvenation of full-time officials at various levels (during the 70s the leadership of all the largest unions, as well as composition of the AFL-CIO Executive, was renewed). True, in many cases that had little effect on the overall policy and the new leaders often quickly integrated themselves into the boss club, yet the unprecedented movement against trade-union bureaucracy that arose at the turn of the decades, involving the active participation of Communists, did cause considerable changes in union leadership.

The most active part of the workers began to realise the insufficiency of trade unionist activity. That is clear from the stand taken by the first conference of grass-roots unionists that took place in Chicago in June 1970. Some 900 workers participated, representing all the major industries. As one of the conference resolutions put it, "It makes no sense to fight the boss on the picket line and then join him on the political and electoral field of action. It makes no sense for organised labour to line up with anti-labour, pro-war, repression-prone and racist. . . . Neither of these two old parties are so constituted as merits a blank check to either from the trade unions. Organised labor therefore, must not be beholden to either the Democrats or Republicans as a Party. It must remain politically independent."¹ The conference set up the National Coordinating Committee for Trade Union Action and Democracy. Its slogans gained people's sympathies and were very popular during the widespread actions by rank-and-file steel workers in 1976 and 1977. Yet at the same time, the actions by the grass-roots groups in various unions remained spasmodic and lacked a common programme.

The older generation of American workers still recall the time when the most militant labour organisations held mass demonstrations, rallies, and grand many-thousand-strong protest marches on

¹ *Labor Today*. Special double issue, Nos. 5-6, Vol. 9, July-September 1970, p. 38.

Washington. That was in the crisis 30s and soon after World War II. In the subsequent decades the right-wing reformist leadership of the AFL-CIO managed almost completely to preclude those forms of struggle from the union movement. But the National Coalition Against Inflation and Unemployment that arose in 1974 returned to some methods of former years. It was joined by the unions at national and local level and also women's, youth, religious and black organisations. On its initiative 32 cities held mass demonstrations demanding an end to price rises and reduction in unemployment (its level at that time exceeded 8 million people). On April 26, 1975 the National Coalition organised a march on Washington in which a total of 75,000 people took part. Blacks and whites, workers and the jobless, unionists and Communists all walked together under common banners.

So as to keep up with events and not to lose the confidence of the rank-and-file, the more far-sighted union leaders tried to accommodate the organised labour movement to the new conditions. That tendency was reflected in the formation in 1968 by the country's two biggest unions, the United Autoworkers (UAW) and the Teamsters Union, of an Alliance for Labour Action (ALA).

The US Communist Party from the very outset warned against overestimating the new union organisation, although it in every way supported the drive to step up the unions' campaign to uphold the workers' interests and to dissociate themselves from the conservative policy of the AFL-CIO hierarchy. Indeed, in the words of Gilbert Green, American Communist researcher, "The ALA was a ship that never left dry dock... The ALA failed because it was a bureaucratic attempt to induce change without involving or taking into account the thinking of the rank and file."¹

Neither the ALA, nor even the movement of rank-and-file union members brought about any qualitative change in the labour movement; they were unable to surmount the political dependence and considerable elements of racist sentiments within its ranks. True, the increasing number of skilled and semi-skilled black workers led to their growing membership in the unions. The AFL-CIO publication noted that every third person joining a union was either black or a member of another ethnic minority.² Under pressure from the black movement an act was passed on civil rights in 1964, formally outlawing racial discrimination at plants and in trade unions. All that somewhat altered the status of blacks in the union movement. In a number of instances black and progressive white workers were able to break the opposition of leaders and members of unions in-

¹ Gilbert Green, *What's Happening to Labor*, New York, 1976, pp. 124-25.

² *AFL-CIO News*, Washington, January 23, 1971, p. 5.

fectured by racial prejudice and to increase black representation in leading union bodies at various levels (metalworkers, bus drivers, teachers, etc.). Black vice-presidents appeared in some unions. In later years the percentage of unionised workers among blacks became higher than among whites, despite racial discrimination in accepting members to certain unions.

Discontent on the part of black workers with the AFL-CIO leadership's policy on the racial issue led to the formation in 1960 of the Negro American Labour Council. Operating within the existing union structure, the Council helped to consolidate the forces of black workers in the fight against manifestations of racism.

An important direction of the struggle of unionised black workers was the appearance in the 60s at enterprises and within the unions of Black Caucuses whose aim was to attain full equality of blacks at work and in all links of the union leadership. The leadership of one such group stated: "We welcome white participation both in leadership and membership in this struggle; we have never opposed it. We are not a black separatist group; we seek change for all workers."¹ A number of organisations, especially the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists set up in 1972, endeavoured to unite and coordinate the activity of various local black groups within the unions.

The Communists assessed Black Caucuses that formed within the unions and public organisations as part of the campaign to democratise the unions and more effectively to safeguard the interests of various groups of workers.² The Party's main premise was more fully to take into consideration in its tactics and strategy the problems of the black movement, and to do everything possible to underline the need for its unity with the working class.

The identity of their aims led many white and black workers to an understanding of the need for joint action. That is evident in the strikes, increasing from the 60s, fighting discrimination against blacks at work. The participation of whites in the black civil rights movement was very symptomatic as well.

Success in the struggle by black workers for civil rights and their growing activity within the unions stimulated the development of the movement against discrimination and for the right of Chicanos (Americans of Mexican extraction) to form unions. The Chicano campaign to set up a farm-workers' union in California was particularly determined; it lasted 10 years and ended in victory for the workers with the act passed in the state in 1975, for the first time

¹ Thomas R. Brooks, "Black Upsurge in the Unions", *Dissent*, March-April 1970, p. 129.

² Roscoe Proctor, *Black Workers and the Class Struggle*, New York, 1972, p. 13.

in the USA recognising the right of farm workers to organisation, collective bargaining, strike and boycott. Similar demands were later made by farm workers in other states.

Chicanos, making up a majority of those employed in garment-making in the South, were also pioneers in the campaign in the industry to have the right to organise; the campaign went on for 17 years, initially against the Farah company, then against Stevens. Only at the end of 1980, with the backing of other sections of workers in the country and abroad, did the garment-workers of the South obtain their first collective agreements with Stevens.

Despite all the successes of the civil rights movement, discrimination continues to be a severe disease with many sections of organised workers. Quite a few workers still uphold race discrimination in the South and among construction-workers', steel-workers', printers' and ladies-garment-workers' unions.

The weakest part of the American labour movement continued to be its ideological and political orientation. Rampant anti-communism by the union hierarchy, which held on to the McCarthyist positions of the 1950s, was the most palpable expression of bourgeois ideological influence on the working class. In the political sphere that led to the unions traditionally following the rules of the game in the US two-party system. For decades the union movement was a major reservoir of votes for the Democratic Party whose social policy manifested relative manoeuvrability and liberalism. The high point was the 1964 election in which more than 80 per cent of unionised workers voted for the Democrats who advocated, under the flag of establishing a "great society", a programme of socio-economic reform and were confronted by the reactionary Republican leadership headed by Barry Goldwater. But the collapse of the "great society" plans, buried in the escalation of the Vietnamese war, and the growth of economic difficulties for American capitalism, led to shifts in the political orientation of the US labour movement.

The traditional adherence of the working class to the two-party system weakened considerably. According to figures by one researcher, the proportion of workers stating "independence" of their party orientation increased from 20 to 31 per cent of surveyed between 1960 and 1968.¹ And as a Gallup Poll showed, in 1974 as many as 34 per cent of workers surveyed were "independent".² The trend towards political orientation independent of the two biggest bourgeois parties continued in the labour movement. Estrangement from the two-party system was most prevalent among the younger

¹ *Blue Collar Workers. A Symposium on Middle America*, New York, 1971, p. 122.

² *The New York Times*, July 18, 1974.

generation of American workers. Young workers were increasingly losing faith in both the Republicans and the Democrats, and were showing political apathy and indifference to the outcome of elections, feeling that both the largest bourgeois parties failed to reflect their interests and that there was no essential difference between them.

Disenchantment with the two-party system was manifested in different ways in workers' political behaviour. Some abstained from voting altogether. Others were enticed by the idea of creating a "third" mass party. And a certain part of workers came under the sway of the populist demagoguery of reactionary politicians who stood opposed to the traditional bourgeois parties. The most ominous symptom of such tendencies was the 1968 presidential election when 15 per cent of organised workers voted for the racist George Wallace.¹ The desire to found an independent workers' party that would directly represent labour interests did not yet attract wide support from American workers. At the same time mounting disenchantment in the late 1970s with the leadership of the Democratic Party, which had taken part in the anti-union campaign, affected not only a certain part of grass-roots unionists but also the liberal grouping within the trade-union hierarchy, and led again to ideas of a "third" party. Yet this was not followed by any real steps in that direction and might rather be seen as a manoeuvre.

On the whole, although the socio-political crisis affected the political orientation of the working class, it meant principally a weakening of traditional political affiliations and had little impact on the overall balance of power in favour of progressive democratic movements and organisations. The changes that did take place evidently did not conform to the scope of problems involved in the socio-political crisis.

The ability of the two major bourgeois parties to retain the working class within the orbit of their influence largely continued. For many workers the crisis of their traditional political orientation was expressed in shifting from support for the Democrats to backing the Republicans. The 1980 presidential election demonstrated that most clearly; it was held in a situation of mounting unemployment, inflation, economic and political instability, the responsibility for which the workers rightly put on the Democratic administration. As a consequence, 47 per cent of workers gave their vote to the Republican Ronald Reagan, while Jimmy Carter received only 46 per cent, a much smaller share than the Democrats had normally got.

The fact that a large part of the working class turned away from the Democrats demonstrated not only profound disillusionment with

¹ *AFL-CIO News*, December 7, 1968, p. 1.

that Party, but serious political immaturity as well. The union leadership launching a vigorous campaign for the Democratic candidate was unable to influence the rank-and-file at the polls, once again proving that understanding and trust were lacking between the trade union hierarchy and the grass roots.

The complexity and contradictory nature of labour movement development created particular difficulties for the Communist Party. The difficulties were compounded by the fact that the Communists were up against a politically experienced adversary with tremendous potential for social manoeuvring and ideological pressure, an adversary who would not stop short of using the repressive apparatus of the bourgeois state if need be.

Despite the difficulties, the Communist Party came out resolutely in defence of the interests of the working class, exerting every effort to unite all sections of the anti-monopoly movement. In the first part of the 60s progressives succeeded in having the anti-communist laws of the McCarthy era repealed. That victory was a result of both the dogged struggle by Communists and support from democratic organisations and, partly, from the labour movement. Active Communist participation in actions for civil rights and democratic liberties, for a peace-loving foreign policy and for workers' rights in no small measure helped to strengthen Communist standing.

The 22nd Convention (1979) was a big event in the life of the Party. For the first time the authorities permitted delegations of 47 Communist and workers' parties, including those from the Soviet Union and other socialist states, to attend the convention. The unions and mass democratic organisations were widely represented at the convention and its work was reported in the press, on radio and television. Delegates discussed the new draft Party programme which in early 1980 was circulated in all Party branches. It appeared at a time when, as the Party General Secretary Gus Hall put it, "the masses are angry and ready for action, but are not yet quite clear as to how and where to direct their anger", and it was an event of major importance; the Communists were putting forward a clear political programme "because of our understanding of the class struggle, our understanding of the laws of capitalist development, of the role of the masses and movements."¹

The Party's performance in election campaigns goes to confirm the above. In 1968, for the first time after a many years' break, Communists put up candidates for the presidential election, but they got their candidates on the ballot ticket only in two states. In 1972 their candidates were put on the ballot in 13 states and the

¹ Gus Hall, "Class Struggle is the Pivot", *Political Affairs*, October 1979, Vol. 50, No. 10, p. 2.

federal District of Columbia, in 1976—in 19 states and DC, in 1980—in 24 states and DC. In 1976 the Communist presidential slate gained 60,000 votes.¹ And they won 157,000 votes at the 1980 election—in those states where Communist candidates were on the ballot.²

Documents of the 22nd Convention and the Party's 1980 election campaign stated that, although US capitalism still commanded enormous economic reserves and potential for social manoeuvring, it had entered a profound crisis penetrating all spheres of society's life. The more painful were manifestations of the crisis, especially internationally, the more active became forces of reaction within the country, the forces that were powerful and favoured a renewal of the Cold War, the arms race and a return to policy of strength.

Wide sections of the people, first and foremost the working class, stood opposed to the forces of reaction. Of fundamental importance was the Party's conclusion on development of ideological, political and cultural unity of the multi-ethnic and stratified US working class and the growing radicalisation of the working people.³ In those circumstances US Communists were looking for new ways and means of working among the masses, and set themselves the task of increasing Party membership and influence, of broadening the Party base among the working class (above all the major industries), among union members and ethnic groups.

WORSENING CLASS CONTRADICTIONS IN JAPAN

The latter part of the 60s and the 70s were an important period in the struggle of the Japanese working class. Here too there were shifts in line with general trends typical of that stage in the history of the international labour movement. The shifts were expressed in growing organised actions: the more determined advancement of direct socio-economic demands, the mounting alternative nature of demands by the left following the maturing crisis of that model of socio-economic development which the ruling class had foisted upon Japan, and in the growing influence of Communists and left Socialists in local government.

As already mentioned, Japan is among the countries with a high level of labour movement. But a number of substantial obstacles lie in the way of its further development.

The specific systems of hire and wages remain a powerful weapon in the hands of the monopolies. By contrast with other indus-

¹ *Political Affairs*, December 1976, Vol. 55, No. 12, p. 3.

² Gus Hall, "The New Political Reality: Analysis and Perspective", *Political Affairs*, January 1981, Vol. 60, No. 1, p. 7.

³ *Daily World*, August 4, 1979.

trially-advanced capitalist states, Japan has long had a system of so-called lifetime employment that ties the worker to "his" or "her" workplace and makes the worker bound to the employer. If the worker wishes to change jobs he is normally regarded as a "fugitive from another workplace" and has a wage cut; the attitude to that worker is worse than to workers who are "devoted to their boss".

The lifetime employment system has also produced its own pay procedure. Pay in many instances depends not so much on the amount and quality of work as on sex, age and the period of work at one enterprise, the size of the enterprise, form of employment (permanent, temporary or day work) and other attendant circumstances. Women's work is paid at only half the rate of men's work. And a young employee who has recently arrived at the job usually receives a little more than a third of the pay of an old worker for the same job. Temporary workers are paid only half the rate of permanent staff. A huge differential exists in work payment at large, medium and small enterprises.¹ This system facilitates the sowing of discord amidst the working class and the splitting of its ranks.

The peculiar structure of the trade unions, that for a number of reasons took shape in the first post-war years, also has an adverse influence on the labour movement. By contrast with unions in most other countries, in Japan they are based not on the industrial principle, but rather—a separate union for each enterprise. Industrial unions normally perform only coordinating functions, exercising insufficient influence on the primary organisations. The great bulk of unions are tiny union groups. That disparate structure hampers any concerted action even by organised blue- and white-collar workers. Besides, the degree of organisation of the Japanese proletariat is comparatively low.

Differences between the two working-class parties, the Communist and the Socialist, and the considerable influence of a reformist tendency also left their mark on labour movement development. In politics that tendency of reformism was mainly represented by the Democratic Socialist Party, and in the union movement largely by the DOMEI federation that stood opposed to the militant union organisation SOHYO and CHURITSU ROREN.

Despite all those factors, at the end of the 1960s and in the early 1970s the labour movement made substantial progress. The number of union members grew between 1965 and 1975 by 25 per cent. And the scope of organised labour action widened. Strikes, demon-

¹ *Rodo tokei yoran (Labour Statistic Survey)*, Tokyo, 1976, pp. 89, 96; *NIHON tokei geppo (Monthly Statistics of Japan)*, Tokyo, April 1976, pp. 79-82.

strations during working time, "work to rule", collective withdrawal for holidays and other forms of legal struggle used mainly by public employees, who were legally forbidden to strike, were the widespread forms of their struggle. During the latter part of the 60s there were almost three times more organised actions than in the first half of the 1950s, while the number of participants in them almost quadrupled. The early 70s were marked by a further sharp rise in mass struggle, but in subsequent years quantitative indicators of the strike struggle dipped somewhat.

As before, the anti-imperialist actions, the movement for changing Japanese foreign policy, had a big part to play in the overall opposition. SOHYO initiated, in 1966, the annual International Day of Joint Action in Support of Indochina. In Japan it was marked by mass anti-war demonstrations by the working class. At the beginning of the 70s the proletariat fought heroically against shipment from Japan of American war materiel to Vietnam.

Demands to democratise the country's political system, defence of rights already won continued to be of great importance in the working-class struggle. Thus, the proletariat successfully warded off attempts by reaction to implement an anti-democratic reform of the electoral system. During the annual traditional "spring offensives" by the unions, in each of which between 8 and 10 million participated, a major demand was for employees at state and public enterprises and offices to be given the right to strike.

The campaign by the working class, primarily unions belonging to SOHYO and CHURITSU ROREN, for the workers' urgent socio-economic demands, for better working and living conditions acquired particularly wide scope in the late 1960s and early 1970s. It involved a wide range of issues concerning the workers' situation. The main orientations of that struggle were as follows: a considerable wage rise, introduction of a general guaranteed wage minimum, abolition of the disastrous effects of capitalist industrial "rationalisation" in the form of redundancies, work intensification and numerous cases of industrial injury and disease, introduction of a 40-hour week with two days-off, radical improvement in the social insurance and medical service system, and an end to unchecked price rises on foodstuffs, items of prime need and services. From the mid-1960s the campaign against pollution markedly grew owing to the worsening ecological problems tied up with capitalist industrialisation.

Significantly, unions favouring co-operation with capital were increasingly forced to latch on to the workers' struggle to improve their status. One vivid example was the long strike by the seamen's union in 1972, the biggest shipping strike in Japan's history. It continued 3 months, from 14 April to 13 July and showed unprecedented determination by the strikers. The 156,000 union mem-

bers belonging to DOMEI rose simultaneously to the struggle, demanding a large wage rise and drastic improvements in working conditions. For the last two months of the strike the country's major ports were completely brought to a standstill. The shipping companies were forced to meet almost all the union demands.¹

As a result of stubborn class battles with the monopolies the working class managed to improve its status to some extent. The quite marked annual growth in nominal wages was of major importance. To a large extent that was due to the success of joint "spring offensives" by the unions. Between 1966 and 1976 each of these actions brought wage rises on the average from 8.82 to 32.7 per cent over the level existing before the struggle started.² Although a large part of that increase was swallowed up by the unceasing price rises on items of prime need, the very fact of such a growth intensified the workers' confidence in their own strength and confirmed the reality of union demands to raise the wages of Japanese workers up to the level in Western Europe.

There was less success in the fight to shorten the working week. Far from all workers even of the big enterprises gained a 40-hour week with two days-off. By 1980 only 30.6 per cent of large company enterprises employing more than 1,000 people had introduced the 5-day week. As for small firms employing between 30 and 99 people, only 2.5 per cent of these had 2 days-off a week.³

The struggle against capitalist "rationalisation" of production implemented by the monopolies at the workers' expense had only partial success. Such leading sections of the proletariat as the railway workers, steel-workers, electrical engineers, postal and telecommunication workers frequently foiled plans by employers to step up intensification of work and mass redundancies. With the backing of other sections of the working class the railway workers conducted a stubborn struggle against "rationalisation" of the state railways involving the sacking of 165,000 people and a sharp increase in work intensity. Management did not succeed in fully implementing its anti-worker plans.⁴

During the 70s the fight against the baneful consequences of capitalist industrialisation, industrial pollution, was marked by substantial successes. The first serious victory of all Japanese workers was the June 1971 ruling by the district court of the Toyama

¹ *Japan Labor Bulletin (Tokyo)*, Vol. II, No. 9, 1972, pp. 2-3.

² *Shakai mondai geppo (Tokyo)*, No. 9, 1972, p. 25; *Rodo tokei yoran*, Tokyo, 1977, p. 92.

³ *Sohyo News (Tokyo)*, February 15, 1976, p. 25 (*White Paper of the 1976 Spring Struggle*. Edited by the Joint Struggle Committee for the Spring Struggle).

⁴ *NIHON Rodosha undoshi*, Vol. 6; *Han dokusen kokumin shyunto hatten*, Tokyo, 1975, pp. 251-53.

prefecture on the case of the victims of itai-itai disease, the agonising illness caused by cadmium poisoning. The court found the Mitsui Kozan Company, that dumped industrial cadmium into a river, of being guilty of people's deaths; it had to pay compensation to 33 itai-itai victims and the families of the deceased. Despite the niggardly sum of the compensation the very fact of the court ruling had immense political significance. In the summer of 1972 the Supreme Court confirmed that ruling.¹ The labour and democratic movements gained a similar victory in September 1971 in their litigation with the electricity company Showa denko over victims of the so-called Minamata disease (serious poisoning by mercury waste) and in July 1972 over victims of the Yokkaichi asthma for which 6 large monopolies in the Yokkaichi district were responsible.² SOHYO, in the van of that national struggle, assessed both events as a victory of enormous national importance.

The strike struggle in the latter part of the 70s took place in difficult political and economic circumstances. A difficult situation continued to dominate many leading industries. The policy of "rationalisation" pursued by the employers and a wave of bankruptcies by small and medium firms contributed to maintaining unemployment; even official figures gave Japan the relatively high level of over 2 per cent. According to statistics from the democratic press, the number of jobless was at least three times the figure and constituted between 3 and 4 million. Because of the continuing rise in prices of items of prime need and services, real wages of blue- and white-collar workers simply marked time.

The "spring offensives" of 1977-1979 came up against increasing resistance by the authorities and employers to the union pressure. Nominal wages in those years increased only by 6-10 per cent. The workers were making not only demands for higher wages and an end to redundancies, but also advanced political slogans: against the anti-popular monopoly policy, against attempts by the ruling groups to set the country upon a militarist path, against bills envisaging a further reduction in workers' living standards, and for the right of public employees to strike. The proportion of labour disputes associated with political demands constantly grew. While in 1973 their share just exceeded a fifth, by 1977 a third of all disputes involved political slogans.³

Despite the fact that the labour movement was unable to achieve a radical change in the balance of social and political power, its gains had a serious impact on the country. As a result, the proletar-

¹ *The Japan Times*, August 10, 1972.

² *The Japan Times*, September 28, 1971; *The Mainichi Daily News*, July 25, 1972; *Polluted Japan*, Tokyo, 1972, pp. 6-77.

³ *Rodo tokei chosa geppo*, June 1978, p. 28.

iat's class awareness, especially that of its unionised members, markedly grew and so did its belief in the possibility of victory over reaction.

That type of development was extremely important insofar as the ruling circles had succeeded for many years in using for their own interests the political passivity of unorganised workers and the insufficiently high level of consciousness among some union members. Being in thrall to bourgeois propaganda, many organised workers, above all those in DOMEI, had voted for the ruling Liberal Democratic Party. According to one researcher, at the end of the 60s over a half of blue- and white-collar workers were a long way from active support for political parties.¹ By tradition they normally voted for a personality rather than a party, irrespective of the party their chosen candidate represented. As the Socialist Makoto Kihara wrote in the mid-60s, "Today most workers and peasants are still not conscious enough of their class interests, and even if they are aware of them in some way, that awareness in the main does not go further than their personal interests. And only very few are at a level to be aware that a transformation of the capitalist system and the construction of a socialist system corresponds to their vital interests. The requirements of the majority are confined merely to issues of everyday life under capitalist society, and they do not show much interest in politics."²

The situation has only begun to change in recent years. Along with the overall upsurge in the labour movement two other factors were behind the change. In the first place, the conviction began steadily to spread among wide sections of people at the end of the 60s and start of the 70s that the policy of the ruling Liberal-Democratic Party was leading the country into a blind alley. The feverish economic growth, which bourgeois propaganda had presented as a solution to all evils, the source of Japan's power, the means of resolving its social problems, and so on, under capitalism engendered unchecked inflation, urban overcrowding and a catastrophic pollution problem unrivalled anywhere else in the world. The energy crisis dealt a fresh blow to the country deprived of sources of energy and raw materials, and exposed the fragility of the foundation on which the Japanese "economic miracle" was based. Signs of political weakness and instability began to appear in the ruling quarters. That was clear from the constant change of LDP leaders and the marked loss of votes for the Party. For a time that did not present a threat to its domination. But then the situation took a marked turn. The opposition parties steered for a democratic alter-

¹ *Rodo Chosa* (Labour Survey), Tokyo, No. 9, 1970, pp. 5-6.

² Quoted from I. A. Latyshev, *Japan's Ruling Liberal Democratic Party and its Policy*, Moscow, 1967, p. 151 (in Russian).

native to the policy of the ruling party. That was indeed the second factor encouraging working-class political activity.

The real contours of the democratic alternative to the Liberal-Democratic Party began to appear with an improvement in the first part of the 70s in relations between opposition parties, which were concluding partial agreements and alliances. As a result of united action by the Communist Party, the Socialist Party, SOHYO, CHURITSU ROREN and other democratic organisations, the labour movement in the 70s gained substantial victories in local elections. Joint candidates of the democratic forces became governors of regional capitals and prefectures in Tokyo, Kyoto, Osaka, Saitama and Okinawa, and also mayors of many Japanese cities. Progressive local authorities existed in late 1975 in important districts of the country with two fifths of the Japanese population.¹

One indication of the mass impact of Communists and Socialists in the 70s were the results of general elections. Thus, during the 1972 elections both parties accumulated almost 17 million votes or 32.4 per cent of the total for the more representative, lower house of parliament; at the next election in 1976 they had more than 17.5 million votes or 31.1 per cent. From 1955 the number of people voting for the Communist Party had increased more than 8.4 times.²

The growth in the number of voters favouring working-class parties in the 70s testified that ever growing sections of the population were pinning their hopes on them. That support helped the gradual strengthening of these parties in parliament. For example, as a result of elections to the lower house held in December 1972 only the Communists and the Socialists made ground out of all the political parties, considerably increasing their number of seats. Communist representation in the house increased from 14 to 38, and Socialist from 90 to 118.

The general election to the lower chamber held in December 1976 marked a fresh grave setback to the ruling Liberal Democrats. The Japanese Socialist Party, the largest in the parliamentary opposition, achieved considerable success: it gained 5 more MPs than it had in the previous parliament.³

As for the Communist Party, the most consistent and determined opponent of the Liberal Democrats, the December 1976 election turned out to be less successful for it than the previous election. It managed to win only 17 seats. That must be put down mainly to the unprecedented anti-communist hysteria whipped up on the eve

¹ *Zenei Tokyo*, No. 11, 1975, p. 140.

² *White Papers of Japan 1969-1970*, Tokyo, 1971, pp. 356-57; *The Japan Times*, December 12, 1972; *Sankey*, December 7, 1976.

³ *Sankey*, December 7, 1976.

of the polls by reaction. Komeito and the Democratic Socialist Party also took blatantly anti-communist positions during the election campaign. Practically in all electoral wards the Communists had to fight on two fronts.

Elections to the House of Councillors held on 10 July 1977 once again confirmed that the influence of the ruling Liberal-Democratic Party was on the wane. But the elections also proved unsuccessful for the Communists and Socialists who campaigned against the anti-popular policy of the monopolies and the LDP representing monopoly interests. The Communists lost 4 and the Socialists 5 seats in the House of Councillors. A major cause of the setback was the widespread propaganda campaign aimed at discrediting the ideas of democratic change and construction of socialist society. A negative factor of no less impact was the lack of broad and stable concerted action between Socialists and Communists, the united front of progressive forces not yet fully established.

In regard to the Socialist Party, its unsuccessful performance in these elections was largely due to the divisive activity by the Party's reformist right wing headed by Saburo Eda, a former Party leader. With a group of his supporters he left the party and set up an independent organisation (the so-called Socialist Citizens' Alliance).

The Communist Party did well all at the local elections held in April 1979: the number of its local councillors exceeded 3,500 by contrast with 773 in 1959. The elections showed a decline in the influence of the Socialist Party. The ruling LDP, backed by the centre parties, Democratic Socialist and Komeito, gained control of governor posts in Kyoto, Osaka and Tokyo.

The elections to the House of Representatives held in October 1979 once again demonstrated the mounting influence of Communists. The number of Communist MPs more than doubled (from 17 to 39), while the Socialists lost 10 seats. The LDP, having lost one seat, was able to summon up a little over half the seats only after gaining the votes of 10 independent deputies.

Public opinion polls taken in the winter and spring of 1979-1980 showed a further drop in the prestige of the Liberal Democrats. In June 1980 a vote of no-confidence was passed on the government and it had to resign and call elections to both houses of parliament.

The lack of unity on the left was apparent in the election campaign. Rather than an alliance with the Communists, the Socialists preferred a moderate joint electoral platform with the right-wing reformist Komeito and DSP. The shift of Socialist leaders to the right and their refusal to co-operate with Communists, the lack of a clear-cut and consistent programme of action in the trio making up the coalition considerably weakened the left opposition.

At the same time, the country's business circles and monopoly capital, seriously alarmed at the developing situation and the possibility of LDP defeat at the polls, bent every effort to damp down the fierce factional struggle underway in the Party and gave immense financial support to its nominees in the election. As a result the LDP managed to gain a majority of seats in both houses at the 22 June 1980 election.

Extensive anti-communist propaganda and the lack of left united action led to the Communists losing 10 seats in the lower and 4 in the upper houses, while the Socialists managed only to cling on to their former number of seats in the House of Representatives (107).

Despite the favourable outcome for the LDP, its position was no more stable. The acuteness of socio-economic problems, the widespread lack of confidence in the Party's ability to cope with the vital issues that directly affected workers' interests, led to continuing political instability from which the ruling party tried to escape by reactionary reform of the electoral system.

Owing to the growing conservative and reactionary tendencies in the policy of the ruling circles in the early 80s, the Communist-proposed tasks in radically changing the country's policy through abolishing the Japanese-American military alliance and declaring the country's neutrality, refusing to serve the interests of big capital, pursuing a policy of safeguarding the people's interests, opposing the rebirth and resurgence of militarism, and campaigning for democracy, have become particularly important.

The mounting class struggle by the proletariat and the progressively waning credibility of capitalism and its political representatives in the eyes of a large part of the public create objective requisites for altering the balance of power in the country, for consolidating the positions of labour parties and further attacking the strongholds of monopoly power. At the same time, the complexities and zigzags of Japan's internal political development show that before the existing possibilities can be realised, the presence of many important subjective factors is necessary, above all unity of all progressive forces and their implementation of consistent anti-monopoly strategy and tactics.

The 15th Communist Party Congress held in February 1980 called on all Party members and organisations to display strong will in fighting, to step up the offensive along the whole front, so as to use the achievements of the 70s properly and make the 1980s a decade of victory for the united progressive front.¹

In his Congress speech Kenji Miyamoto, Chairman of the Board of the Party Central Committee, underlined the constant aspiration

¹ *Akahata*, March 9, 1980.

of Communists for concerted action with all democratic parties and groups, in spite of the differences in outlook and divergent views on the ways to bring about revolution.

* * *

Events at the end of the 60s and during the 70s in the major capitalist states vividly showed that a great deal in their development depended on working-class activity. The more active the working class was during the socio-political crises as representing the interests of all working people, all national interests, the greater the success it gained and, at the same time, the more substantial was the overall aftermath of the crisis in terms of the alignment of political forces and changes in the socio-psychological climate. Thus, however deep the changes in American society, left-wing forces were not only unable to set themselves the objective of coming to power in the country, but were incapable of acting as a united mass force, of offering a real alternative to the state-monopoly policy. The main reason was that the labour movement in the USA was lagging behind, that it was politically passive during the crisis. Against that background the new tendencies, not yet prevailing in the labour movement, that promise potential shift to the left are of extreme importance, especially in the long term.

The active and key role of the British working class in furthering the socio-political crisis was greatly limited by its reformist political outlook, the domination of reformism in its mass organisations. Nevertheless, the British working class advanced to the centre of the political struggle and counterposed its class interests to those of the monopoly bourgeoisie in both the economic and, to a certain extent, the socio-political sphere. Also important was a certain flexibility displayed by mass labour organisations, their ability to readjust under pressure from below. All that paved the way for a new advance by the British working class, for breaking new ground.

The French and the Italian working class, acting as a force offering an alternative to monopoly rule, had a much greater effect on the course of events. The activity of Communists and their influence on the people played a large part.

The experience of the events following in the wake of the socio-political crises of the 60s and early 70s shows that in evaluating the results and significance of those crises for the labour movement more than just the concrete gains made during the crisis itself should be taken into account. Not all consequences of the socio-political crisis are immediately evident. Thus, right after the May 1968 events in France it would seem that the left, having won a battle over economic demands, had a setback in the political sphere: differences came to the surface in the left camp and at the

elections the ruling party obtained an unprecedented majority. But as time passed it turned out that the paramount result of the May events for the labour movement was not the material gains that were to become devalued fairly quickly by inflation, but the lesson of unity obtained through adverse experience, which was to become an achievement of wide sections of the people and facilitate left accord. The May events widened the range of participants in the anti-monopoly struggle. They demonstrated the importance of drawing the students, engineering and technical personnel and office workers into an alliance with the working class, and posed the issue of unity in a new way. It became clear to all participants in the struggle that until the left had stable unity it could not win the political battle with capital. Therefore, the agreement of June 27, 1972 on a Joint Programme involving Communists, Socialists and Left Radicals was a natural outcome of the events of May 1968 and the 1969 presidential election. That accord marked both a decisive strengthening of unity and the elaboration of a platform and tactics of the labour movement under the impact of the May events.

The overriding result of the socio-political crises of the late 60s and early 70s was precisely the further development of the subjective factor of labour and democratic struggle. In most advanced capitalist countries, through historical reasons, that factor lags behind objective conditions characterised by considerable maturity of prerequisites for socialism. The forms of political thinking, the support given to this or that party, and popular notions of socio-political relations are all distinguished in long-standing bourgeois societies by substantial tradition and stability, which makes the work of Communists and other progressives more difficult in fighting to enhance political consciousness of the masses. The socio-political crises violate the inertia of mass consciousness, shaking the old stereotypes and helping people to acquire new truths. As the CPSU Central Committee Report to the 25th Congress of the CPSU stated, "new generations and social strata, new parties and organisations are joining the revolutionary process"¹. The events of May-June 1968 weakened considerably the psychological barrier between the French working class and the engineers and technical personnel, which is undoubtedly a prime condition for establishing an alliance of those two social forces. The "hot autumn" of 1969 in Italy, too, had an extensive and multifarious impact on popular consciousness and the stand taken by politicians of varying viewpoints. The mounting unity of Italian trade unions, the development of mass action for a new socio-economic policy, the importance that

¹ *Documents and Resolutions. XXVth Congress of the CPSU, Moscow, 1976, p. 33.*

relations with Communists had for all political forces, which became the dominant issue of public affairs—all of that can only be understood within the framework of the long-term effect that the “hot autumn” events had on the country’s political and socio-psychological climate.

As a rule, the socio-political crises of the late 60s and early 70s did not drastically resolve the problem of power or structural change; they therefore did not lead directly to surmounting the acute class conflicts, did not remove the contradictions coming to a head. Yet they did create new and often more favourable conditions for their resolution in favour of the democratic forces. More eloquently than any form of agitation they indicated the limits of stability of the existing system, and exposed the falsehood of the picture of well-being that the apologists for neocapitalism had nurtured for decades among the populace. It is not only that the people better understood their interests. The stormy events aroused their energy, showed them their own strength. By destroying the correlation of forces cast in certain traditions and institutional forms, the crisis facilitated an imminent realignment in the political arena. Inertia that had hindered the development of the struggle was being broken. In Britain, for example, as the socio-political crisis matured, it increasingly put in question convergence between Conservative and Labour programmes and policies that was common for “tranquil” periods. It helped polarisation of forces and, to a large extent, restored the hitherto tarnished image of the Labour Party as a workers’ party.

The discrediting of the ruling circles, or even the entire prevailing system, caused by the crisis, as well as the power of the people displayed during the struggle, forced the ruling class to bring fresh manoeuvres into play and resort to fresh concessions. It was after the May events that the French ruling groups were obliged to take a whole series of social measures and proclaim widely-trumpeted plans to establish a new society. Such long-postponed and sabotaged reforms as, for example, introduction of regional self-government in Italy became a reality under the impact of the maturing crisis. In this way the socio-political crises did much to alter the scale of the struggle, frequently giving it new dimensions.

That put great responsibility upon the progressive forces of the working class and its militant vanguard, confronted it with new complex tasks that were sometimes difficult to resolve. It was important to maintain the initiative, not to allow either rashness or passivity in the face of the new issues. In Italy, for example, development of the socio-political crisis set the Communist Party and all left forces the problem of responsibility for the country’s economic development, of coordinating the demands of various sections of the

workers with the needs of a new economic policy based on democratic and anti-monopoly principles. That was all the more important since reactionaries used the economic difficulties as an instrument in their attempts to force a counterattack.

The socio-political crises created not only favourable conditions for promoting the labour movement; the protracted crises, especially given the insufficient activity of the working class, gave birth to a real danger of the instability being used by the extreme right, openly reactionary, anti-democratic forces. The crisis situation, constant social tension, the economic difficulties (often intensified by international factors) and the loss of customary patterns all knocked the intermediate strata out of their stride. At points of equilibrium between the contending forces there was an increasing tendency among the ruling quarters to try a more violent, authoritarian approach to the conflict by suppressing the democratic forces and curbing democratic rights and liberties. That tendency was being reinforced by outside pressure, the subversive activity of international imperialism.

As was noted at the 25th Congress of the CPSU, "The recent experience of the revolutionary movement provides graphic evidence that imperialism will stop at nothing, discarding all semblance of any kind of democracy, if a serious threat arises to the domination of monopoly capital and its political agents. It is prepared to trample upon the sovereignty of states and upon all legality, to say nothing of humanism. Slander, duping the public, economic blockade, sabotage, bringing about hunger and dislocation, bribes and threats, terrorism, assassination of political leaders, and fascist-style pogroms—such is the armoury of present-day counter-revolution, which always operates in conjunction with international imperialist reaction."¹ The repelling of the right-wing danger and threat of foreign imperialist intervention is therefore the constant concern of Communists and other progressives during the socio-political crises. The foiling of reactionary-fascist provocations and plots in Italy organised obviously with the involvement of the CIA, and the fight against fascist and right-wing radical movements in the USA operating in various guises were all an exceedingly important aspect of left activity during the socio-political crises of the 1960s and 1970s. The battle against threats from the right made it particularly vital for the working class to have allies, to win over not only the proletariat but a large part of the intermediate strata to progressive ideas. Consolidation of the gains made, defence of democracy and rebuff to attempts at resurrecting fascism were at the same time a stimulus in mobilising and uniting all left-wing forces, a search of new ways of mass organisation.

¹ Ibid., p. 36.

Chapter 11

THE LABOUR MOVEMENT AND THE BREAK-UP OF FASCIST REGIMES IN WESTERN EUROPE (GREECE, PORTUGAL, SPAIN)

Within the process of build-up of the strength of democratic tendencies in the political life of the capitalist countries, the collapse of the last fascist regimes in Western Europe was an event of immense significance. In this important political change—itsself an integral part of the general advance made by the forces of democracy and social progress in the 70s—a decisive part was played by the labour movement in the countries under the yoke of fascism, and likewise by the solidarity campaigns which were widely developed throughout the world. The build-up of the forces of the working class, and the increasing shakiness of the position of the ruling cliques, provided favourable conditions for the fight to achieve decisive democratic changes in those countries.

THE LEFT-WING FORCES OF PORTUGAL IN THE ANTI-FASCIST REVOLUTION AND IN THE STRUGGLE TO DEFEND THE GAINS MADE IN THAT REVOLUTION

Portugal was the first country to throw off the fascist yoke in the 70s, and at the same time the first state in Western Europe in which the economic crisis of 1974-75 acted as a catalyst for radical political changes. The revolutionary process, commencing with the overthrow of the fascist regime on the night of April 24-25, 1974, here assumed specific forms which were in many respects not characteristic for developed capitalist countries. This was connected with a number of objective factors.

Portugal was the most backward country of capitalist Europe. Portuguese fascism, unlike its Spanish counterpart, had proved incapable—in almost half a century of its rule—of modernising the economy and moving on to the system of state-monopoly capitalism. Portugal remained a country of mid-developed capitalism, dependent upon foreign capital. At the start of the 70s, on all the prin-

cial indices of economic and social progress Portugal showed figures only 50-65 per cent those of Spain, 50-30 per cent those of Italy, 25 per cent those of France, etc.¹ The average wage of a Portuguese worker was one-sixth that of the average wage for Western Europe, and the country was the world's biggest exporter of labour power.² Incomplete industrialisation, huge landed estates in the south of the country, extreme economic dependence upon the major powers, a feeble state sector—all these factors made the Portuguese economy different from that of the majority of the developed countries of Western Europe. By the same token, they brought Portugal closer to other countries with dependent capitalism or capitalism in mid-development.

The bourgeoisie of Portugal was still the weakest in Europe. Its ability to compete was based solely upon the extremely low level of workers' wages. In exerting its political power it relied entirely upon repression and upon the ideological and political control of the Church over the masses. Portugal had no modern system of political parties and mass organisations. Outside the so-called "red zone" in the south of the country (which had the main industrial centres and a large proportion of farm-labourers), where less than 20 per cent of the population lived, the working people were almost totally without experience of political struggle. The northern and eastern parts of the country were characterised by the overriding influence wielded by the most reactionary church hierarchy in Europe, and by the ignorance and the down-trodden, apolitical existence of the masses.

The sole political force which in over forty years had conducted and led political struggle against the fascist dictatorship was the Portuguese Communist Party (PCP). Reformist traditions in the labour movement were weak, and the growth of anti-fascist feeling led to a strengthening of the authority and prestige of the Communist Party.

All these features of pre-revolutionary Portugal were the pre-conditions for a certain inner similarity between that revolution and those in mid-developed and dependent capitalist countries in Latin America, and in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. But in a number of important aspects the pre-revolutionary situation in Portugal differed significantly from that typical for mid-developed countries, and this could not help but put its stamp very definitely upon the course of the revolutionary process.

¹ E. Rosa, *A economia portuguesa em números*, Lisbon, 1975, pp. 31-34 (statistics summarised by the present author); also *Mirovaya ekonomika i mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya*, No. 11, 1974, p. 57.

² E. Rosa, op. cit., pp. 45-46; also M. Moreira Alves, *Os soldados socialistas de Portugal*, Lisbon, 1975.

As a result of the great economic upsurge of the 60s and early 70s the rate of industrialisation in the country speeded up,¹ and elements of state-monopoly structure made their appearance. In the agriculture of the country's northern and eastern regions small-holdings were the predominant form of ownership; the workers on the big estates formed only 10 per cent of the population.²

The revolution was directly caused by a crisis in Portugal's colonial empire and fascist state, which accounts for the predominance within it of political factors over social and economic ones, and for the comparatively weak presentation of broadly democratic, broadly national issues in the development of the revolutionary process after the overthrow of fascism and the cessation of colonial war.

These factors, together with the low level of class consciousness among working people, produced the danger of the proletarian vanguard finding itself in some isolation politically (the working class in Portugal made up no more than 20 per cent of the economically active population). The effect was heightened by the geographical concentration of the main body of the working class in five or six provinces only, outside of which the proletariat was comparatively few in number and consisted largely of people who had only recently left country life with its atmosphere of small property-holding and clericalism. The narrow bounds of the front of anti-fascist struggle prior to April 25, 1974 (the only systematic struggle against fascism had been that waged by the Communists and by groups of conspirators among the military) were instrumental in deepening the gulf between the social and political vanguard and the main mass of the population, which later proved to be the principal weakness of the Portuguese revolution.

An extremely important factor, one which exerted a vital influence on the course and the outcome of revolutionary events, was the closeness of the ideological links between Portugal and Western Europe, and this reached far back into history. A desire to preserve those links, to aspire to Western European standards in economic and political organisation, in consumption, and in matters of ideology and attitudes, was something that ran right through many sections of the population. In the actual circumstances of the 70s this made it easier to draw on the valuable experience of the labour movement of Western Europe, but also heightened the negative in-

¹ Between 1950 and 1970 the percentage of those employed in agriculture throughout the country fell from 48 to 32 per cent, while the numbers employed in industry and construction work rose from 25 to 33 per cent of the workforce, and the share of the latter sectors in the GNP rose from 38 to 45 per cent (see M. Murteira, *Política económica numa sociedade em transição*. Lisbon, 1977).

² *Portugal, república socialista?* Lisbon, 1975. p. 38.

fluence of bourgeois and social-reformist concepts on the revolutionary process in Portugal.

The fight for liberation by the peoples of Portugal's African colonies was a most potent factor in bringing to a head the revolutionary situation in Portugal itself. The hopeless war in the colonies produced a tendency to division within the bourgeois camp, within ruling circles, within the armed forces. Social upheavals brought about by economic growth, the death of the dictator Salazar, the lessening of international tension starting to take place at that period—everything contributed to the process, and simultaneously contributed to the growth of the fight put up by democratic forces. After the first wave of strikes in late 1968 and early 1969, the year 1973 brought a new rise in the strike movement (over 100,000 joining strikes in the towns, plus a mighty movement among the agricultural workers in the provinces of Alentejo and Ribatejo) and an upsurge of struggle for democracy and against the colonial war. In this struggle the leading force was the Communist Party of Portugal, headed since 1961 by Alvaro Cunhal as its General Secretary. The Party brought some of its cadres out from the undercover conditions in which they had previously had to operate, and set a great wave of active work in motion in the industrial establishments and within the fascist trade unions. The PCP's newspaper *Avante!* began to be published regularly. A number of trade unions freed themselves from the control of the fascist authorities and appointed a left-wing leadership closely linked with the masses. On October 1, 1970 a united trade union organisation was set up, in defiance of existing law—the Intersindical, bringing together over 700,000 industrial and office workers. The Communists took an active part in the campaign prior to the elections of 1973, as one of the parties within the united opposition, the Movimento Democrático Popular.

The leaders of the Caetano régime which had assumed power after Salazar's death were in doubt and wavered in their choice between preserving the fascist state and carrying on the war "till victory", on the one hand, and opting for a measure of "liberalisation" and ending the war by offering the colonies "autonomy", on the other. Meanwhile the so-called Movement of the Captains (Movimento dos Capitães, an anti-government organisation of middle-ranking army officers, which had first appeared in 1973, numbering 150 members to begin with, though this later rose to 400; it was then reorganised as the Armed Forces Movement or MFA) had become disillusioned, after the rigged elections of 1973, as to the possibility of the régime's peaceful transformation, and set about preparing an armed anti-fascist coup. This organisation's programme—democratisation, "de-colonisation" (i.e. peace to be concluded with

the colonies with the latter's right to self-determination being recognised), and economic development—coincided with the Communist Party's "minimum programme".

The overthrow of fascism, prepared and made possible by decades of struggle by the democratic forces of Portugal and above all by its Communists, was actually achieved by the Movimento dos Capitães on April 25, 1974. The military coup disposed of fascism within a few hours. The hesitations of the top generals and of a considerable section of the regular corps of officers were overcome by the appointment to the post of President of General António de Spínola—a leader of the "European" wing of the high-ranking officers and a mouthpiece for the interests and attitudes of the monopoly bourgeoisie, which was closely linked to the multinationals and had its sights set on European markets. For a short time the country had what seemed to be comprehensive anti-fascist unity, bringing together extremely heterogeneous and to some extent even antagonistic forces—from the "new monopolies" to the revolutionary proletariat. The outward expression of this stage in the revolutionary process was the formation, in mid-May, of a government led by politicians representing the big bourgeoisie, but including some ministers from the Socialist and Communist Parties.

The fact that the coup was carried out "from above", the illusions born of its bloodless realisation and the almost unanimous support it enjoyed, were factors that did not assist the democratic movement to overcome its basic weaknesses—insufficient political experience among working people, and the gap in levels of political consciousness between the vanguard and the broad mass of the people. Nevertheless, under the pressure of objective circumstances the revolutionary process quickly began to reach deeper. The outstanding feature of its first stage, beginning with April 25th, was democratisation of the country's political life, a "flood-tide of freedom" after half a century of fascist dictatorship, an accelerating disintegration of the old state apparatus. The activity and degree of organisation of the proletariat grew apace, especially in Lisbon and in the south of the country. The Communist Party, the only body enjoying immense moral authority on a national scale, won a number of important positions in the trade union movement and the peasant movement, also on local authorities and in the media. The part taken in political struggle by the central trade union body, the Intersindical, became more and more vigorous.

In these circumstances the bourgeoisie realised, even as early as May 1974, that its hopes of limiting the consequences of the coup to a mere redecoration of the façade of power, which would open the way to rapid and far-reaching capitalist modernisation, were hopes built upon sand. Demands by the proletariat for much higher

wages, demands reinforced by crisis and inflation, undermined the competitiveness of most industries. The demands for all-round democratisation of the life of the country, for complete dismantling of the fascist governmental apparatus both centrally and locally, for total eradication of the roots of the Salazar regime—and all this at a time when the bourgeoisie could not rely upon either the armed forces or any established party-political structure—were a threat to the very foundations of capitalist political power. And lastly, thorough-going “de-colonisation”, the transfer of power to revolutionary organisations in the colonies, meant annihilation of the bourgeoisie’s positions in Africa.

Under these conditions, the bourgeoisie and its traditional patrons in the West directed their efforts towards sabotaging the political and socio-economic programme of the revolution and establishing Spínola as an “enlightened” dictator who would make sure that they got the required result in the forthcoming elections for a Constituent Assembly, and that the process of “de-colonisation” would be halted or at least slowed down.

But the crude and obvious methods employed by the politically inexperienced bourgeoisie, and the fact that its allies in the camp of international imperialism had not yet recovered from the shock of what happened in April, condemned the counter-revolutionary manoeuvres of 1974 to failure. In spite of the fact that most of the officers in the MFA were middle-class (notably from the intelligentsia), their sincere anti-fascist and democratic convictions, their experience during the revolution and their contacts with representatives of the left-wing parties, not to mention the frankly counter-revolutionary attitudes of the leading bourgeois groups—all combined to push the MFA leftwards; its leading nucleus began to lean towards a revolutionary, anti-capitalist programme. In July 1974 representatives of this radical tendency within the MFA took over the leading positions in the government. The anti-democratic attitudes displayed by the bourgeoisie and that section of the military which supported Spínola were repellent to the greater part of the urban middle classes. Procrastination over concluding an agreement on peace in Angola exacerbated feeling against Spínola in the army and in the population at large.

It was against this background that an attempted counter-revolutionary coup essayed by Spínola on September 27-28, 1974, relying on the traditional middle-class support, was foiled by decisive action taken by the Communist Party, the MFA and the trade unions. Through the united efforts of the workers of Lisbon and those military units which remained faithful to MFA leadership, Spínola’s military support was neutralised, as were the conservative elements in the North which had been mobilised through clerical influence;

and at the same time mainsprings of a fascist conspiracy organised by Salazar's surviving "heirs" were also broken. On September 29 Spínola resigned from the post of President. In the new, third Provisional Revolutionary Government the key posts were held by revolutionary and left-reformist figures. In the course of the following weeks the overtly reactionary section of the officer corps was dismissed from the armed forces.

The outcome of the September crisis showed that a social revolution was under way within the country which went far beyond the bounds of a purely political coup. Its cutting edge was now in fact directed not only against the remnants of the fascist political structure, but against the very foundations of power of the bourgeoisie and the capitalist system. The defeat of the bourgeoisie at the end of September 1974; its loss of the key positions of political and military power; the firmer alliance achieved between the vanguard of the working class and the radical wing of the MFA, and the prestige and political positions which they had won—all this created considerable possibilities for realisation of basic social and political changes and advancement of anti-monopolistic and socialist aims. At the same time the objective logic of development of the revolutionary process made such a course historically necessary: it was called for in the light of the immediate, actual tasks of the revolution by the need to consolidate the results already achieved. That measures should be taken against big monopoly and latifundary capital was dictated by the need to break the enemy forces—those of counter-revolution plotted both by the fascists and by the Spínola grouping; it was also dictated by economic necessity, in face of the financial and industrial sabotage being practised by the entrepreneurs; it was dictated, again, by the social demands being advanced by the working class.

At its Seventh (Extraordinary) Congress in late October 1974, the Communist Party of Portugal posed the question of immediately (i.e. without waiting for the Constituent Assembly) setting in motion radical measures for the abolition of monopolies and of the latifundia—measures which would bring the country's economic base into line with its new, revolutionary-democratic superstructure.¹ At the same time (early November 1974) the first references to the socialist trends in the revolutionary process within the country appear in documents of the MFA.

However, the favourable opportunities for bringing about radical changes and carrying the revolutionary process further, which had thus appeared in the autumn of 1974, were in many ways transient

¹ *VII Congresso Extraordinário do PCP*, Lisbon, 1974, pp. 342-55.

and fortuitous, since they did not rest on any broad, firm basis socially and economically. Given the comparatively narrow range of social forces which had actively participated in the revolution, and the backwardness and inexperience of the masses, it was hardly to be expected that the majority of the population would be quick to realise the need for such measures and to support them.

The reformist leadership of the Portuguese Socialist Party (PS) led by Mário Soares came out against decisive advancement of the revolution. This was a sharp change of course on the part of the PS, which had earlier adopted a wavering or "wait and see" attitude, and was made under direct influence from the leadership of the Socialist International and the US administration. At the end of October 1974 the PS became the party of those strata which had hitherto been passive, aroused by the revolution but not enlightened by it. Specifically, the PS gained the support of the new middle classes in the big cities and the tourist areas, and extended its influence to a part of the newly formed proletariat of the central and southern areas, likewise to the traditional middle classes and peasantry of several of Portugal's central provinces. Contrary to its own recent declarations of support for left-wing ideas and for unity of forces, the PS leadership not only failed to direct the above-named mass forces into revolutionary channels—on the contrary, by exploiting and exacerbating the weaknesses of the movement, it transformed it into a major force operating, objectively, against the revolution.

By its demands that all power should be vested in the Constituent Assembly and its opposition to the alleged "totalitarian" aims of the PCP, and to unity within the trade union movement, the PS leadership played skilfully upon the anti-communist prejudices of the petty bourgeoisie. It also took account of the fact that a good proportion of the masses wanted to see Portugal kept within the social and economic framework of the West, a desire which can be put down to a large extent to consumerist attitudes, but most importantly to the attraction exerted, after half a century of fascist dictatorship, by a bourgeois-democratic type of political organisation of society (this was felt with especial strength by the new urban middle classes).

The PS's position was supported by the right-of-centre People's Democratic Party (PPD), which formed part of the governmental coalition, and found support likewise among moderate, left-reformist elements within the MFA. Discussion, and then sharp political struggle, over problems of power and pluralism continued until the end of February 1975. The main gains of the revolution over this period were: a comparatively rapid maturing of revolutionary, socialist consciousness within the ranks of the MFA (it was in the

winter of 1974-75 that the MFA leadership made its declaration on the socialist orientation of the revolutionary process in Portugal); a strengthening of the positions of the PCP, including its positions within the leading organs of government; and the confirmation in law (January 1975) of the organisational unity of the working-class movement within the single trade union centre of the Intersindical. But on the whole, the tempo of development of the revolution slowed down considerably over this period. These months were utilised by the bourgeoisie for rebuilding of their own organisations, re-establishment of connections with other capitalist countries, and preparation for the elections to the Constituent Assembly, to take place in spring 1975—the Assembly which they saw as destined to return to them the power lost in 1974.

At the end of February 1975 Vasco Gonçalves, the then Prime Minister and the leader of the radical, revolutionary-socialist wing of the MFA, issued a declaration that the MFA intended to remain in power for a number of years, irrespective of the results of the elections to the Constituent Assembly, with the object of "ensuring the irreversibility of the revolutionary process". The decision to do this, which was supported by the PCP, was the logical result of class struggle and of the realisation by the left among the officers of what the objective requirements of the revolution were; it met with fierce resistance from the liberal-reformist elements within the government coalition, and from the right and ultra-right opposition. The PS leadership held talks with ex-President Spínola. But a putsch essayed by pro-Spínola elements within the Air Force and the police (on March 11, 1975), although easily put down—within a few hours, and practically without casualties—by units loyal to the government, changed the political situation drastically. Spínola fled abroad. The political parties connected with him, including the PS, were thrown into disarray. This situation was taken advantage of by the left-wing forces (first and foremost the MFA leadership), so that they were able, in the teeth of the strongest possible pressure exerted against them by the bourgeois (and social democratic) governments of the West, to carry through the measures which the PCP had been advocating since October 1974.

On March 14, the banks and insurance companies were declared nationalised. Thereafter the major monopolist concerns were also nationalised. Up to 60-65 per cent of the country's total industrial resources were now under state control. National monopoly capital had lost its positions within the country's economy. Simultaneous declaration was made of an agrarian reform spelling death to the system of latifundismo which had held sway in the south of the country. On these estates the former agricultural labourers began to set up hundreds of collective farms. An "institutionalisation" of

the MFA was effected: the Revolutionary Council—the recently re-created leading organ of the Movement—became in law the supreme organ of government. At the same time the PS, the PPD and most of the other political organisations of the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie were obliged to sign a constitutional document which provided that the key posts in government should for the next 3-5 years remain in the hands of the MFA.¹ In the government thus reorganised at the end of March the influence of consistently revolutionary forces was significantly greater than before. The weight carried by “action from below” was on the increase: in the spring of 1975 instances of seizure of factories by workers, of estates by agricultural labourers, became much more frequent. From Lisbon and Porto and the southern regions of the country the revolution gradually spread to the north and the east.

The proclamation by the Revolutionary Council of the MFA of its socialist aims thus not only expressed the intentions of the revolutionary leadership, it was also based on the realities of an objective process. In the course of the several political crises of 1974 and early 1975 various factions of the bourgeoisie were removed from governmental power and control of the armed forces, and the opportunities for action by reformist elements were reduced. For a short time, a bloc uniting the working class and the revolutionary military intelligentsia occupied the dominant positions in government, in the higher army command, in the mass media, in the local government organs of a number of regions, and in the organs of workers’ self-management in industry. In the cities the same alliance held control of the streets. The transformations wrought by the revolution had broken the hold of the monopolists and the latifundistas and were chipping away at the foundations of the capitalist system of socio-economic relationships.

At the same time, though, the chief weakness of the revolutionary process in Portugal—the narrowness of its social and political base—was far from overcome. More than that: the gap between the revolutionary forces of the MFA, now in power, and the very numerous portion of the population at large which had not been won over to revolutionary and socialist ideas, grew wider during the spring of 1975. The objective requirements of the revolution, and accumulated political experience, were drawing those in power further and further on, while within the country opposition to their proceedings was growing, partly through hitherto passive sections of the people—mainly the most backward sections—being brought into the struggle by the efforts of the bourgeoisie, and partly through a shift to the

¹ See *Boletim del MFA*, No. 15, 1975.

right on the part of a considerable section of the urban middle classes, which had welcomed the ending of fascism but were frightened by the subsequent development of the revolution. Very relevant here were the fears, played upon and blown up out of proportion by reformist circles, that further development of the revolution would lead to a "break with Europe"; even more relevant, the contradiction between the objective need for a strong, centralised revolutionary government and the "pluralist" illusions of the middle classes, who had furthermore lost their fears, since the failure of the March 11 putsch, that fascist dictatorship might make a comeback.

At the same time the positions held by the revolutionary forces in the purely political sphere, too, were still very vulnerable: they did not wield complete political power either at the centre or—still less—on the periphery (the revolution had still not come to the northern, especially the north-eastern, regions). Between the various revolutionary groupings (in the army especially) there were serious disagreements; and, most important of all, the government and the Revolutionary Council could not rely on any state apparatus: that formerly existing was in effect paralysed, and the organs of revolutionary democracy were still only in the process of formation. The foremost task was to broaden the social basis of the revolutionary process, mainly by social measures which would be in line with the immediate interests of the middle strata. But the country's economic situation was worsening month by month, from the joint effects of economic crisis, sabotage by the Portuguese bourgeoisie, blockade imposed by the world bourgeoisie, and socio-political instability.

In this very involved situation the MFA leadership confirmed (despite the opposition of a number of its own members) that elections would take place in the spring of 1975, on April 25, to a Constituent Assembly which would be empowered to work out a Constitution for the country. The decision to do this was connected with direct economic and political blackmail applied by the West, with underestimation of the possibilities still open to counter-revolution even after its defeat a few weeks previously, and with overestimation by the left-wingers within the MFA of their own influence. A propaganda campaign of lies on an unprecedented scale and of unprecedented monstrosity, run in the pre-election period by right-wing political forces and by the Church, played a great part in mobilising the forces of counter-revolution.

The course of the election campaign, and the results of the elections, gave the counter-revolutionaries back their faith in their own powers, and excellent political and ideological bridgeheads from which to launch their later counterattack. The revolutionary parties and organisations got only 17.8 per cent of the votes cast (among

these, 12.5 per cent were for the PCP). 2.8 per cent went to ultra-left groups. The right-of-centre People's Democratic Party won 26.3 per cent of the vote. A further 8.2 per cent went to groups even further to the right than the PPD. But the outright victor in the election was the Portuguese Socialist Party, which gained 38 per cent of the vote. Furthermore, whereas the PCP and the other left-wing parties found their support almost exclusively in the south of the country,¹ and the right-wing parties, in the centre and especially in the north², the PS got from 24 per cent to 52 per cent of the vote right through the country, and 45 per cent in the main cities, Lisbon and Pôrto.

The elections thus confirmed that the majority of the nation supported the anti-fascist, anti-colonial and democratic aspects of the revolution. At the same time they demonstrated and themselves made worse the isolation of the revolutionary-socialist vanguard, successful though it had been in gaining possession of a number of key positions of power, from the main mass of the population in the northern part of the country. The factors which had been favourable to rapid development of the revolution, such as the weakness of counter-revolution within the country and the relative inaction of counter-revolution outside it; the unity and undoubted authority of the MFA and its evolution leftward; and the advantage enjoyed by the PCP by virtue of its leadership of consistent anti-fascist struggle—all these were now, in the summer of 1975, to a large extent things of the past. It was of equally great significance that the general democratic and national problems, which while being contested had kept the support of the main body of non-proletarian working people firmly on the side of revolutionary development, were now either solved (the war overseas ended, "de-colonisation" accomplished) or thought by most people to be so (fascism finally smashed, as they thought). Lastly, a very important negative result of the 1975 election was the hesitation and wavering produced by its results in the ranks of the revolutionary vanguard itself: centrifugal tendencies within the MFA increased very markedly. All of this was exploited by the forces of counter-revolution over the following months. "The results of the elections to the Constituent Assembly," writes Alvaro Cunhal, "may be seen as a stage along the road to political and military crisis, a splitting of the democratic forces and a splitting within the MFA. It was this time which saw

¹ In Southern Portugal the left as a whole had about 30 per cent of the vote, and in the "red provinces" of Setúbal, Beja and Évora as much as 47.3 per cent, while in Northern Portugal they got only 11.5 per cent.

² In the north the voters supporting the right-wing parties made up 47 per cent of the total, and in the south only 17.5 per cent (and in the "red belt" only 7.8 per cent). See *Portugal, república socialista?*, pp. 40-41.

the start of that exacerbation of conflicts which led later to the sad events of November 25, 1975."¹

Overall, the elections to the Constituent Assembly were the turning-point in the development of the revolution. The line of the graph began to curve down rather than up.

The counterattack by the bourgeoisie and the forces supporting it, begun late in April 1975, went through several clearly marked stages. In the first of these the reformist elements remained within the revolutionary government; in effect opposing its policies, they covered up their activities by an ever-increasing campaign against the Communists. Provoking sharp conflicts with the PCP and the left elements in the army, subjecting the leaders of the left wing in the trade unions to ceaseless attack, and giving the same treatment to the left in the media and in local government, the leaders of the PS were busy mobilising public opinion against "the communist threat". Any constructive action by the government in the economic and socio-political spheres was in practice paralysed. Simultaneously there was an accelerating rapprochement between the two trends of counter-revolution—the centrist trend, which in words at least accepted the socialist prospect of development, and the openly oppositional and anti-socialist trend, represented primarily by the Catholic church and by semi-fascist elements working underground.

The plans of right and centre alike were favoured by the government's lack of any effective means with which to fight counter-revolution, and by some mistakes made by the left-wing forces after their coming to power (the insufficient attention they had paid to social problems; something of a sectarian attitude towards the PS and the left-reformist elements within the MFA; underestimation of the possibility of a quick political comeback by the opposition), also by growing disagreements within the MFA.

From early July 1975, the counter-revolutionary forces go over to an all-out frontal political attack upon the unconsolidated power attained by the revolutionary vanguard. The Socialist and People's Democratic parties left the government and started a noisy campaign for its resignation. Mass demonstrations organised by the PS in the big cities coincided with a wave of anti-communist pogroms, carried out under the guidance of the ultra-right and of the church hierarchy in the small towns of the north and centre of the country. The MFA, with its shortage of social and political experience, proved unprepared for sharp, unconcealed class confrontation replacing a bloodless revolution. The polarisation of socio-political forces in the country at large led inevitably to exacerbation of the disagreements

¹ A. Cunhal, *A Revolução portuguesa. O passado e o futuro*, Lisbon, 1976, p. 156.

within the MFA: its more moderate left-reformist wing, led by E. A. de Melo Antunes, in early August made public their demand for a general slowing down of the pace of the revolutionary process. This programme was supported by a significant proportion of the MFA's members and by the career officers who had taken no part in the Movement. The revolutionary elements within the MFA were on the contrary split: Gen. O. de Carvalho's left-populist group came out against Premier V. Gonçalves and his supporters.¹

By the late summer of 1975 there was imminent danger of a counter-revolutionary coup or of civil war. Under these circumstances, in the last days of August 1975 the left forces went over to the defensive, and were then obliged to retreat. In early September the moderates won a majority within the Revolutionary Council of the MFA. In the government formed at the same time, under Admiral Y. P. de Azevedo, the overwhelming majority were "centrist" (Socialists and MFA moderates). Representatives of this trend gained new positions in the state apparatus, the mass media, the leadership of the armed forces. In the middle echelons of the MFA the influence of right-wing elements, working up a decisive blow against the Movement's revolutionary wing, was on the increase again.

But the outcome of the struggle was not yet clear-cut. A wave of general strikes and political demonstrations by the proletariat, spontaneous seizures of big landowners' estates in Alentejo, cohesion of the revolutionary forces within the MFA (bringing together the supporters of Gonçalves and de Carvalho), and hesitation among the moderates—all these, it might seem, heralded a new upsurge in the revolutionary movement. In mid-October the left forces retained strong positions in the Navy, in the garrison of the capital, and in the newly re-created soldiers' organisations, and attempted to mount a counter-attack.

In this situation the PCP, in view of the growing danger from the right, and bearing in mind the insufficiency of the left wing's mass base, advanced a proposal for formation of an anti-fascist left-of-centre bloc, which would include the main trends within the MFA (including the moderates), the PS, the PCP, and left radical groups. Formation of a new revolutionary government on this base, without representation of the bourgeois People's Democratic Party, was to be the political answer to the crisis in which the revolution had found itself since the summer of 1975.

The successful struggle being put up by the PCP and other left-wing forces to get this solution put into effect was cut short, however, by the tragic events of November 25-26. Some officers of ultra-left persuasions initiated actions by left-wing regiments; these were

¹ V. A. Tsoppi, *The Portuguese Revolution; Trends and Problems*, Moscow, 1979, pp. 164-70 (in Russian).

unorganised, uncoordinated, and to a large extent the result of provocation by the right wing, and they created a threat of direct confrontation between the left forces and a bloc of right-wing and reformist elements, and such a confrontation would inevitably have meant the rebellious troops being crushed by the government's specially trained punitive units. In an attempt to preserve the chance of a political solution being found within the framework of an anti-fascist strategy, the Communist Party condemned the adventurism of the ultra-left, and called on the masses of the proletariat to refrain from action. This made it possible to avoid civil war and the establishment of a rule of terror, but it could not prevent a sharp shift in the general balance of forces in the army and the country at large to the advantage of the right wing.

The destruction of the revolutionary wing of the MFA, carried out on the excuse provided by the mutiny of November 25-26, also weakened considerably its left-reformist trend. The key positions in the armed forces were now held by career officers who had taken no part in the Movement of Captains, and who favoured a restoration of bourgeois power. In mid-December they did away with the political apparatus of the MFA. Even before that, the left wing lost control of the media. At the same time wages were frozen, and an "austerity programme" was announced which would bear most hardly upon the working people. The forces of revolution thus lost not only their influence within the army but almost all their positions within the organs of government, so that the key positions were transferred from the reformist bloc to bourgeois-conservative elements.

The main reason for the defeat of the left was that at the decisive moment of struggle against counter-revolution the social base of the revolution proved insufficiently broad, primarily on account of objective contradictions within Portugal's situation, born of her history. Similarly, there was no objective basis for taking those measures which might have broadened the support for revolution by winning over new sections of working people. Attempts by the revolutionary government to overcome this contradiction by energetic measures met with failure. The revolutionary vanguard, isolated and bereft of its original political advantages, was obliged to retreat.

After November 25, 1975 the labour movement and all the forces of the left were faced with new tasks, primarily of a defensive nature: the fight to preserve the socio-economic and political gains won by the revolution, and to overcome the country's increasingly dependent economic position.

Runaway economic and financial crisis, and the desire of the bourgeoisie to wipe out the gains won by the revolution against monopoly, while to do so within the framework of democratic institutions

was difficult, meant that the threat of a return to fascism was real. This had been recognised by the Communist Party as far back as the spring of 1975. Until November 25, 1975, the Communists and the left wing of the MFA held that the only effective way of countering that threat was to develop the social revolution further and make the revolutionary government more secure. After the events of November and the sharp change in the country's internal situation which they produced, the Communists rejected the tactic of continuing the offensive and gave steady and consistent support to unity and co-operation between all the revolutionary forces (i.e. primarily between the PS and the PCP) in the fight to preserve and strengthen the institutions of representative democracy, and democratic rights and freedoms. This they did in the belief that successful resistance to authoritarian tendencies was objectively possible, given the country's half a century of experience of fascism and of anti-fascist struggle, also the prevailing international atmosphere of detente, the democratic attitudes that were dominant within the Portuguese armed forces, and a number of other features of the situation within Portugal. But the essential conditions for successful resistance were unity of the democratic forces, an active labour movement, and the retention of the social gains won by the revolution.

Eighteen months of revolution had wrought great changes in the structure of Portuguese society and in the position of the working class. Whereas prior to the revolution the weight of the state sector within the Portuguese economy had been lower than in any other economy in Western Europe, in 1976 nationalised enterprises alone controlled 38 per cent of the country's joint-stock capital, accounted for 45.5 per cent of all investments, and provided 25 per cent of the gross national product.¹ The state was managing the operation of scores of major undertakings whose owners had been sabotaging production or had abandoned it completely. In all, more than 200,000 workers were employed by major enterprises within the state sector. Over and above these, more than 700 workers' co-operatives had been set up, mainly on the basis of previously existing small enterprises. In the course of these social and political changes and of the struggle against economic sabotage by the bourgeoisie, Workers' Commissions had come into being in industrial establishments in both the public and the private sector—these commissions were bodies exerting workers' control, and they had rather wide powers in matters of economic management (including access to all information on production and commercial operations). At many enterprises the commissions developed into a form of workers' self-management.

¹ *The Economist*, May 28, 1977.

In the countryside, over 1,100,000 hectares of land had been confiscated from the large landowners (about 20 per cent of the country's cultivated land). On these confiscated lands 450 collective farms had been set up, with around 100,000 people working on them. It was this sector of the country's economy, now controlled by the working people and, unlike the state sector in industry, not susceptible of integration into the system of state-monopoly capitalism, which from the autumn of 1976 onwards became the target of unceasing attacks by the bourgeoisie.

Over the years 1974-75 the wages and living standards of the proletariat—especially those of its lowest-paid sections—had risen considerably. A minimum wage was introduced (and raised on more than one occasion), and provision of paid holidays was extended; agricultural workers were brought within the scope of collective agreements. Dismissal of workers "without due cause" was forbidden; unemployment benefit was introduced; pensions were raised. Throughout the revolutionary period price rises were kept down. The proportion of national income going to the working class rose from 48 per cent in 1973 to 57 per cent in 1975.¹

In the fight which was put up by the working class of town and country to retain the gains won through the revolution, a leading part was played by the Portuguese Communist Party. In a period of tense struggle, under attack from both right (in the name of "democracy" and "pluralism") and pseudo-left (under slogans like "No compromise!" and "Keep up the revolutionary advance!"), the Party succeeded in maintaining the unity of its own ranks and unity within the mass organisations of the working people, reducing centrifugal tendencies within the labour movement to a minimum and keeping its progressive sections faithful to a revolutionary line. The policy of unity with the PS meant that the Constituent Assembly, by a left-of-centre majority vote, in March 1976 approved the most democratic and progressive Constitution to be found in the capitalist world. The hopes which the right-wing forces had entertained, of winning an absolute majority of seats in the April 1976 elections to Parliament (now called the Assembly of the Republic), were not realised. The right-wing parties—the People's Democratic Party and the Centre Democratic Party—won 42 per cent of the votes cast. The Communists won 14.6 per cent overall (and 44 per cent in the three "red" southern provinces); the Socialists 35 per cent; and various ultra-left groups 3.5 per cent. Taken together, the PS and the PCP had an absolute majority of seats in the Assembly. However, proposals for a coalition between the two parties, and formation of a new government on that basis, were rejected by the

¹ *Economia e socialismo*, Nos. 12-13, 1977, pp. 14-15.

leadership of the PS, owing to the prevalence of anti-communist attitudes within it and to pressure from right-wing circles in the army. After the election of Ramalho Eanes, leader of the centrists within the officer corps, as President of the Republic, in June 1976, the PS formed a "homogeneous" minority government, headed by Mário Soares. This government's policies followed, by and large, the recommendations put forward by international finance capital: their effect was gradually to restore capitalist relations within the country's economy. The PS government looked for a way out of the worsening economic position through foreign loans and "austerity", the weight of these being born to an ever increasing extent by the working people. In order to deprive the latter of any opportunity for active resistance, and with the further object of destroying socio-economic structures and relationships which had been brought into being by the revolution and which were incompatible with the development of state-monopoly capitalism, the government embarked upon a wide-ranging offensive against the trade unions and especially against the farming co-operatives in the south of the country. This policy caused differences within the PS to become acute, and a left-wing group was formed within it (Lopez Cardoso and others) which on a number of issues made common cause with the Communists.

The Communist Party subjected the capitulatory, anti-democratic and "back to capitalism" aspects of the PS government's activity to strong criticism. But at the same time it was careful not to give the right-wing parties the chance to exploit the PS's lack of a parliamentary majority so as to oblige the Soares government to resign and give way to a right-of-centre coalition government.

During the revolutionary period the PCP had extended its influence in practically all areas of the country, bringing together under its leadership all the genuinely left-wing forces in the country, including some of the working people who had formerly supported the PS. The Eighth Congress of the PCP, which took place in November 1976, confirmed yet again that the line of the party of the proletariat must be to continue to pursue a consistent policy of alliances, which would ensure a firm social and political base for the revolution and provide the preconditions for its eventual triumph.¹ "Splits within the democratic and popular forces can benefit no one but the reactionaries," wrote Alvaro Cunhal, General Secretary of the Portuguese Communist Party. "The PCP continues to give its firm support to a policy of unity of all the left-wing forces which wish to fight for a democratic Portugal moving along the road to socialism."² Evidence of this is provided by the results

¹ See *VIII Congresso do PCP*, Lisbon, 1977.

² A. Cunhal, *Discursos políticos-III*, Lisbon, 1975, p. 172.

of the local government elections held in December 1976. The FEUP (Frente Eleitoral de Unidade Popular, or Electoral Front of Popular Unity), led by the Communist Party, gained more than 17.5 per cent of the votes cast—as many as the revolutionary forces had won under the incomparably more favourable circumstances of April 1975 (in three southern provinces the left wing won about 48 per cent of the vote, and up to 60 per cent in the proletarian suburbs of Lisbon). The electoral support of the PS, on the other hand, in spite of the fact that in the south some right-wingers again voted for the Socialists, went down to 33.3 per cent. The right-wing parties again failed to win a majority.

The growing discontent over living standards among working people caused a crisis within the trade unions led by the PS. These unions, representing white-collar workers and some sections of the northern proletariat, now joined the Intersindical, which united up to eighty-five per cent of all the organised workers, both blue- and white-collar, in Portugal (1,700,000 out of a total of two million trade unionists).¹ In January 1977 a Congress of all the country's trade unions reformulated the structure and programme of action of this central trade union body (which now took the title of General Confederation of Portuguese Workers, Intersindical Nacional); it elected a leadership composed of Communists, left-wing Socialists and representatives of left-radical elements within the trade-union movement. The resolutions of this Congress became an important starting-point for development of resistance to policies of "creeping restoration" of the old order.

Meanwhile the leaders of the PS were moving—gradually, and in zigzag fashion, but inexorably—to the right, and even commenced a frontal attack upon the basic gains that had been won in the social and economic fields by the working people. Prices of foodstuffs and other basic commodities rose sharply (while wage rises were limited); a number of industrial enterprises and landed estates were given back to their former owners; a law was passed (though not confirmed by the MFA Council of the Revolution) limiting the powers of the workers' commissions; guarantees of employment in industry were partially repealed. But the principal measure attacking the gains of the revolution was the new law on agrarian reform (Barreto Bill), which aimed at destroying the co-operative farm system in the South. This PS policy led to bloody clashes in southern areas. At the same time, the question of expelling left-wingers from the PS was put on the agenda.

Under these circumstances, at the end of the summer of 1977 the PCP abandoned the policy of "critical support" of the Soares govern-

¹ See *Pravda*, June 2, 1979.

ment, calling for the formation of a government which would represent all the democratic forces of the country, or for new parliamentary elections.

In December 1977, under circumstances of worsening economic crisis and deepening class struggle, the Soares government fell. The PCP declared its readiness to support a PS government on condition that it should cease attacking the socio-economic advances made by the working people and the revolutionary transformations brought about in 1974-75. But despite these efforts by the PCP to achieve unity, in mid-January 1978 the Socialist leadership entered into a coalition with the right-wing CDS (Centre Democratic Party or Centro Democrático Social), on the basis of a programme which in effect meant a stepping-up of the attack on gains made during the revolution. This policy exacerbated the disagreements within the PS. Its left wing seceded, and formed the Alliance for Popular Unity (Alianza Povo Unido).

But the PS/CDS government proved incapable of effective action, owing to internal dissensions. It existed after a fashion until July 1978, when it was replaced by a "non-party" Cabinet under Mota Pinto. This, the most right-wing of all the governments since the revolution, in late 1978 and early 1979 unleashed an outright offensive against all that had been won in the Portuguese revolution. Using the Barreto Bill as legal cover for their actions, the authorities attempted to take vast tracts of nationalised land away from the peasant co-operators by force, and return them to the big estate-owners whose property they had previously been. In the provinces of Alentejo and Ribatejo, where most of the co-operatives were, real battles took place between peasants and police, the latter using armoured vehicles. The government did not rest content even with this; 134 industrial enterprises were reprivatised, and the system of workers' self-management within industrial undertakings came under systematic attack.

The results of this policy were that many factories closed down, the increment of the GNP came down to 3 per cent, and the deficit in the foreign trade balance grew greater (60 billion escudos in 1975, 130 billion in 1978), with the foreign debt also increasing (from 254 to 300 billion escudos over the same period). The country's dependence upon the International Monetary Fund and other imperialist forces grew ever greater. The social and economic problems were thus not solved at all, but became even more acute.

At its Ninth Congress (May 31-June 3, 1979) the PCP put forward the democratic alternative, in which the main points were: stability of democratic government and respect for the Constitution, with civil rights and liberties assured; a policy of economic growth; living standards of the working people and middle strata to

be protected and improved; reform of the educational system, and a cultural policy serving the people; unity of the armed forces; national unity and territorial integrity; establishment of friendly relations and co-operation with nations throughout the world; reversal of illegal decision and acts by the previous government. The Congress expressed its confidence that the gains of the revolution would be defended and built upon.¹

The Portuguese people showed great resolution in defending their rights. In 1978 1,800,000 workers took part in strike action. In the first three months of 1979 alone there were 59 mass meetings and demonstrations. Thanks to this resistance by the mass of the people, the reactionaries did not succeed in cancelling either nationalisation or the agrarian reform. Out of the 550 co-operatives and collective farms which had come into being in the course of the agrarian reform, 517 survived, and they held about one million hectares of land. Nationalised enterprises and industries remained the property of the state, and in many industrial establishments workers' control continued in being.

The resistance which the working people mounted to the attempts to nullify the achievements of the revolution meant that the Pinto government was doomed to failure. Only the right-wing CDS supported the government bills on the state budget and economic plan for 1979. In June 1979 the Socialists and Communists put down a parliamentary motion of no confidence in the government. Opposition to Pinto's cabinet from parties which together commanded a parliamentary majority, and the prospect of Communists and Socialists uniting on the no confidence vote, obliged the government to resign.

In July 1979 President Eanes dissolved parliament and entrusted the formation of a caretaker government to Maria de Lourdes Pintassilgo (a representative of left-wing Catholic circles). The Socialists and the Communists supported this government. Disregarding urgent pleas from the right-wing forces, it did not confine itself to current business and the preparation of elections. In the economic field, it adopted a number of measures serving the interests of the worst-off sections of the population, raising the national minimum wage and the level of pensions and family benefits, and halting the transfer of land in Alentejo province back to the big estate-owners. But this government was in existence only for a very short time (100 days), and resistance to its measures from the right-wing parties meant that its programme got no further.

The election campaign took place under circumstances unfavourable to the parties of the Left. The country was experiencing se-

¹ See *IX Congresso do PCP*, Lisbon, 1979.

rious economic difficulties. The number of unemployed was on the increase, inflation was growing from year to year, and the dependence of Portugal upon the capitalist powers was growing ever greater. The forces of reaction, perverting the true facts, blamed the left, and in particular the Communists, for the existing state of affairs. Anti-communist propaganda began to build up again.

The forces of the left did not succeed in achieving even formal unity of action. In spite of repeated efforts and proposals from the Communists, the leadership of the Socialist Party stubbornly refused to take any joint action. Meanwhile the parties of the right overcame their centrifugal tendencies and formed an election bloc. The result was that this Democratic Alliance—which included the Social-Democratic Party—PSD (formerly the People's Democrats), the CDS, and the People's Monarchic Party—PPM—was victorious, though only just, in the elections of December 1979, gaining 128 seats out of 250.

Of the left-wing parties, only the PCP had any success. The Communists fought the election campaign jointly with the Portuguese Democratic Movement (the MDP, or Movimento Democrático Português), setting up the Alliance for People's Unity. In these elections of 1979 the above Alliance gained 47 seats (44 for PCP candidates and 3 for the Democratic Movement's), whereas in 1976 the Communist Party had won 40 seats. The votes cast for communist candidates totalled over one million. This success was confirmed by the results of the local government elections, in which the PCP and the MDP together got 20.7 per cent of the vote (2.5 per cent more than the PCP had won in 1976).¹

A significant indication that the PCP's strategy and tactics were correct was provided by the success it achieved in the north of the country. This demonstrated once again that even in areas where traditionally reaction held sway there was a growing awareness among workers, peasants and parts of the urban petty bourgeoisie of where their real interests lay. Overall, the PCP was successful thanks to its consistency in defending the interests of the people and the freedoms and democratic changes won by the revolution of April 1974. The right-wing campaigns intended to reduce the influence of the Communists and isolate them, did not work out according to plan.

The inconsistent, zigzag policy pursued by the leadership of the Portuguese Socialist Party, and its fondness for anti-communism, brought about its defeat. Whereas in 1976 35 per cent of the electorate voted Socialists, in 1979 this had gone down to 27.5 per cent. The Socialists lost 34 seats and about 280,000 votes.² In the local

¹ See *Pravda*, December 5 and 20, 1979.

² *Ibid.*

government elections the Socialists lost control of 50 municipalities, including Pôrto, the country's second largest city. The PS lost not only those right-wing voters who for various reasons had supported it when revolutionary events were at their height, but also a significant proportion of its traditional supporters among the urban petty bourgeoisie. And lastly, the growing influence of the Communist Party among some sections of the proletariat and working peasantry meant that here too some previously Socialist votes were lost.

The net result of the 1979 elections was a shift to the right. The new government, headed by the leader of the Social Democrats, Francisco Sa Carneiro, and backed by a very slender parliamentary majority, mounted a wide-ranging attack on the gains of the revolution. The handing back to its former owners of land expropriated after the revolution went on even faster than before. In contravention of articles of the Constitution, the government transferred huge tracts of land back to the estate-owners, deliberately breaking up the areas belonging to co-operatives and facilitating the re-formation of latifundia, which had been prohibited under the law. The government made efforts to undermine nationalisation, one of the chief socio-economic achievements of the revolution. It was announced that leading enterprises in the public sector were in "economic difficulties". This gave government bodies the opportunity to change the management, to limit wages, and to transfer enterprises to private capitalist hands.

The main guidelines of the right-wing Cabinet's foreign policy were an increasingly pro-NATO orientation, measures paving the way for entry into the Common Market, and participation in the anti-communist campaigns initiated by the Carter administration.

In carrying out this policy of restoring the positions held by big business and latifundistas, the Democratic Alliance gave great importance to active preparations for the forthcoming (1980) elections to parliament and to the presidency. The government prepared and laid before parliament a number of bills designed to ensure electoral victory to the Alliance. The latter almost completely replaced the boards governing the radio, television, ANOP (the official news agency), and the editorial staff of a number of newspapers, putting their own supporters in charge. Thus the Sa Carneiro Cabinet was able to control all the bodies responsible for information, and to exploit them in their own election propaganda.

The Sa Carneiro government, then, and the Cabinet which replaced it in December 1980 (after Sa Carneiro was killed in a plane crash) under Francisco Pinto Balsemao, did everything possible to prepare the ground for a review of the Constitution, particularly those articles concerning the gains which had accrued to the people

from the revolution, primarily nationalisation and the agrarian reform.

But a very real obstacle to the realisation of these plans was the struggle put up against them by the broad mass of the people, and likewise the position taken up by the Council of the Revolution and by the President of the Republic, whose powers were still quite considerable.

In the spring of 1980 the Council of the Revolution declared unconstitutional the amendments, pushed through by the right-wing majority in parliament, to the law on the delineation of the public and private sectors of the economy, for these amendments were intended to facilitate denationalisation of some major industries. This prevented the changes being ratified as legal. In the summer of 1980 the country was swept by a wave of mass demonstrations by the working people, answering a call put out by the trade unions and actively supported by the PCP. Thousands took part in the Day of Struggle organised in 30 towns throughout the country. The main demand put forward at these demonstrations was for the right-wing government's resignation.

Wishing to make sure of success in the next elections, the government not only ensured the support of conservatively-minded voters by promising to review the Constitution, it did its best to gain wider support by raising the level of pensions a little. The success which was won by the parties of the right in the parliamentary elections of October 1980 was made easier by the lack of unity of the left. Despite repeated approaches by the PCP, the Socialist leaders categorically refused to come to any sort of agreement. While verbally opposing the policies of the right-wing ruling Cabinet, in practice the Socialists were often a help, objectively speaking, to the forces of reaction. The PS supported the proposal that the Council of the Revolution should be disbanded, and Soares declared, in defiance of the decision of his own party's National Commission, that he would not support Eanes in the forthcoming presidential election.

The main contest in the parliamentary election was between the Democratic Alliance, the Republican Socialist Front (which included, as well as the Socialist Party, the Union of Left Forces for Socialist Democracy and the Independent Social Democratic Action), and the Alliance for People's Unity. The outcome was that the Democratic Alliance won 134 of the 250 seats, the Republican Socialist Front gained 74, and the Alliance for People's Unity 41.¹

But in the presidential election the Democratic Alliance's candidate, Sa Carneiro, was defeated. Ramalho Eanes, who enjoyed

¹ *Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn*, No. 11, 1980, pp. 132-33.

great personal popularity, and whose candidature was supported by the Communist Party as well as others, was re-elected. Eanes declared he would make every effort to defend democracy and the Constitution. The reactionaries were thus unable to realise their plans. In this situation the working-class movement, and all the left forces of Portugal, were faced squarely with the task of achieving unity of action in order to prevent those on the right from increasing their parliamentary majority and wiping out the achievements of the revolution. As Alvaro Cunhal said at the 26th Congress of the CPSU, "Revolutionary changes in Portugal have been safeguarded thanks to the popular masses, who do not have political power and are against the prevailing order. This situation cannot last indefinitely. That is why the Portuguese Communist Party is struggling for the unity of all democratic forces, and for the replacement of the reactionary by a democratic government, which would carry out an internal policy based on the gains of our revolution, and an external policy of peace, friendship, and co-operation with all peoples".¹

Despite the counterattack mounted by reaction in the late 70s, the revolution in Portugal had far-reaching repercussions internationally. It gave the labour movement, and the communist movement, of Western Europe new experience, and contributed new weapons to the theoretical arsenal of the working class. The revolution made much easier the victory of the national-revolutionary movements of Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau and Angola, and ipso facto facilitated the removal of the last remnants of colonialism and the establishment of a socialist orientation on the African continent. And lastly, the Portuguese revolution was the starting-point of a chain-reaction in which the fascist regimes in the south of Europe fell one after another.

OVERTHROW OF THE MILITARY-FASCIST DICTATORSHIP IN GREECE AND ACTIVATION OF THE LABOUR MOVEMENT

Three months after the overthrow of the fascist dictatorship in Portugal, another fascist regime also fell—the terrorist dictatorship in Greece. Unlike its Portuguese counterpart, Greek fascism had been able to retain power for only seven years. The regime preceding it, which in many respects prepared the ground for fascism, had been the monarchist police regime that established itself in power after the defeat of the democratic forces in the civil war of 1946-49. Even at that time the powers of the bourgeois parliament had been curtailed, and wartime special powers were in force. The rul-

¹ *The Words of Friends*, Moscow, 1982, p. 259.

ing oligarchy maintained close links with US militarist circles.

But the struggle put up by the democratic forces did not come to an end, fed as it was by still unsolved problems of economic development and by ever-increasing social tensions. In the late 50s and early 60s there was a certain shift to the left, under the pressure exerted by the mass movement fighting for its social and economic demands to be met, and fighting too for democracy and an end to American dictation in the political arena. In the parliamentary elections of 1958, almost one-quarter of all votes cast were for EDA (the United Democratic Left)—a bloc uniting Communists and left-wing democrats that was set up in the early 50s. At the election of November 1963 the Radical Union, a right-wing party, was defeated. Its successful rival, the bourgeois-liberal Centre Union, had its leading position confirmed in the parliamentary election of February 1964, when it gained 53 per cent of the vote.

Seeing this as a threat of a leftward swing, and taking advantage of the fragmented state of the forces in the democratic camp, the reactionary army officers—the “black colonels”—carried out a coup: on April 21, 1967, a military junta headed by Col. George Papadopoulos seized power. These home-grown forces of reaction were supported by the militarist circles of the USA and of NATO, which saw any shift to the left in the political life of Greece as a threat to their own strategic interests.

The “black colonels” outlawed all political parties, introduced draconian censorship, declared scores of democratic organisations dissolved and confiscated their property, and banned all gatherings of working people. Strikes were declared illegal. For a number of years Athens, Piraeus and Salonika were under the restrictions of a state of emergency. Thousands of opponents of the regime, those who had not got out of the country in time, were thrown into prisons or concentration camps. In order to prevent the appearance of any organised opposition, the junta established the strictest of controls over trade unions and centres of higher education.

The “black colonels” afforded assistance of all kinds to large-scale capital, both Greek and foreign. There was a certain speed-up of industrial development, but it was accompanied by stagnation in agriculture and in a number of the older industries. Social inequality increased, and social unrest with it. Even the ubiquitous network of the apparatus of repression could not keep that unrest in check.

The resistance of the working class, which at first had been passive and purely defensive, became increasingly organised and more ready to take the offensive. “Fighting committees” were set up in the factories and on board the ships of the merchant fleet. Since strikes were illegal, the workers employed tactics such as the “go-slow” and refusal to work overtime. Even as early as late 1967

strikes did start to take place, despite the ban. Under this pressure from below the leadership of the General Confederation of Greek Labour, appointed by the junta, and even the "black colonels" themselves, were obliged to manoeuvre and to make some partial concessions. Workers, both blue- and white-collar, succeeded in winning some wage rises.

Very diverse social and political forces became involved in the fight against the fascist regime. The Communist Party of Greece, which headed the movement against the dictatorship under the most difficult conditions, as an underground, illegal body, was in favour of all opposition organisations accepting a minimum programme—deposition of the junta, repeal of all emergency powers, a general amnesty, and elections to the Constituent Assembly. The Communists stressed the need for both legal and illegal work, for support for the immediate demands of workers, peasants and young people, and for restoration of the sovereign rights of the people.¹

In the late 60s and early 70s two organisations were especially active—the Patriotic Front Against Dictatorship, led by the Communists, and the Workers' Front Against Dictatorship, which brought together representatives of various trends within the trade union movement. Open actions against the dictatorship on the part of different groups of intellectuals became more frequent.

The movement reached a peak in 1973. On the anniversary of the colonels' coup, April 21st, there were demonstrations against the military junta in many towns throughout the country. In November 1973 there were mass demonstrations of students and working youth, calling for restoration of democratic liberties. Students of the Athens Polytechnic called for an uprising against the fascist regime. They were supported by the workers. For three days 5,000 students and young workers who had barricaded themselves into the Polytechnic repelled the onslaughts of the police. Their resistance was only broken when regular troops were brought in, using tank. Several dozen young resisters were killed, and over a thousand wounded.

These November events, demonstrating the strength of the opposition to the dictatorship, led to a "little coup" within the junta itself: Papadopolos was deposed and Gen. Phaidon Ghizikis became President. The real power was now in the hands of the head of the military police, Brigadier General Demetrios Ioannides, notorious for his bloody reprisals against patriots and democrats.

Looking for a way out of the growing political crisis at home, the new men in power tried to muster mass support by forcibly

¹ See *the Ninth Congress of the Communist Party of Greece*, Moscow, 1975, pp. 20-46 (in Russian).

carrying through *enosis*—union of Cyprus with Greece. But the organisation, by Ioannides' agents, of an anti-government coup in Cyprus brought Greece to the brink of war with Turkey—a conflict for which Greece was not prepared either economically or militarily.

Fearing that the total discrediting of the junta brought about by the disastrous Cyprus adventure might lead to a social explosion, the army commanders felt obliged to "bring in the politicians": in July 1974 the military dictatorship collapsed. The post of Premier in a civilian government was offered to Constantine Karamanlis, who had been in exile, and who had played a prominent part in Greek political life in the 50s and 60s. He was the leader of the National Radical Union, a right-wing bourgeois party founded by himself in 1955, and he had in that period been Prime Minister for eight years. Karamanlis had left Greece after the electoral defeat of 1963. Thereafter he had made clear his condemnation of the military junta and had called for restoration of a parliamentary regime. He himself described his political position as "centrist, liberal-progressive."

The strength of anti-fascist feeling among the broad masses of the people was clearly shown by the mass democratic movement which came to active life immediately upon the fall of the junta. The Karamanlis government bore this in mind, and announced that the first priority task was to rebuild a democratic regime. Political prisoners were released from the prisons and concentration camps; political exiles were allowed to return to the homeland. The government condemned the revolt against the government of Cyprus and declared its intention of working for a fair and peaceful settlement of the Cyprus problem. A start was made on purging stooges of the dictatorship from the armed forces and the state apparatus. Over twenty former leaders of the junta were arrested. The Communist Party of Greece was legalised, a measure which met with universal approval.

On emerging from underground existence, the Communist Party first concentrated its attention upon stabilising its own organisational structure and upon attaining unity with all forces which were anti-monopoly and pro-democratic. The Party's newspaper, *Rizospastis*, began to appear again after long absence, as did other Party publications. The Party put up a resolute fight for removal of all traces of the military dictatorship, for clearing all its adherents out of the state service. Communists also put in much active work in favour of actually taking their country out of NATO's military system, removing American bases, reaching a peaceful solution to the differences between Greece and Turkey, and settling the Cyprus problem in accord with resolutions passed by the United Nations.

The first measures taken by Karamanlis, which were popular with

the broad masses, helped to ensure his success in the parliamentary elections of November 17, 1974—the first for ten years. Thanks to the aura surrounding Karamanlis as the “restorer of democracy” and saviour of the country from civil war, the party which he had created upon his return to Greece, under the name of the New Democracy, won an absolute majority. The electoral system employed, of “reinforced proportional representation”, was favourable to major parties, and resulted in the New Democracy Party gaining almost 70 per cent of the seats in Parliament.

An electoral bloc called the United Left, which brought together the Communist Party, the EDA and a number of other progressive organisations, got 9.5 per cent of the vote. Several factors reduced the number of votes potentially available to the United Left: almost one million voters (out of a total of 6 million) were disenfranchised, among these being people who had just returned from exile (the electoral register had been compiled while the junta was still in power) and Greek workers abroad; young people between the ages of 18 and 21 did not have the vote (there were about 600,000 of these), and the left was particularly strong among this age-group.¹ The Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK), which was led by Andreas Papandreou, son of a popular political figure who had been Premier on more than one occasion, gained 13.6 per cent of the vote. The real political influence of the left was much greater than appeared from the results of the November 17, 1974 parliamentary election. The strength of the desire for greater democracy prevalent among the broad masses was shown by the results of the referendum held on December 8, 1974, on what the constitutional nature of the Greek state was to be. 69.2 per cent of the electorate voted for a republic, 30.8 per cent for a monarchy. A majority of the nation thus said no to the reactionary monarchist past and showed their support for democracy and social progress.

Throughout the middle and late 70s a gradual polarisation of political forces was taking place in Greece, and dissatisfaction with the ruling party was on the increase. Democratic public opinion and the opposition parties of the left were strongly critical of the Karamanlis government's refusal to pursue a consistent policy of far-reaching democratisation, to carry through to the end the cleaning-up of the state machinery and the army from pro-junta elements. The line taken in foreign affairs by Karamanlis, his policy of “af-

¹ An indication of this is provided by, for instance, the results of elections within the Students' Union of Athens, which took place on November 9, 1974. Out of 209 representatives elected by the students, 90 were close to the Communists, 54 to the Panhellenic Socialist Movement, only 20 to the New Democracy, while the rest were independents of leftist persuasions. In subsequent years the influence of the Communist Party and of the Panhellenic Socialists increased even further.

filiation with the West", evoked equally negative reactions in democratic circles. After declaring in August 1974 that Greece would leave NATO's military organisation in protest against the bloc's failure to stop Turkish action with respect to Cyprus, the Karamanlis government later engaged in a partial renewal of military co-operation with NATO: participation of the Greek army in NATO military exercises was sanctioned, and American military bases continued to function on Greek soil.¹

For several years the Karamanlis government made persistent efforts to get Greece accepted as a full member of the European Economic Community (she had been an associate member since 1961). At the end of May 1979 a treaty was formally signed in Athens which made Greece the tenth member state of the Common Market, as from January 1, 1981. The Communist Party of Greece, PASOK and other left-wing forces actively resisted this entry into the Common Market, pointing out that membership would have a disastrous effect on the weak economy of Greece, would worsen the foreign monopolies' exploitation of the Greek people.

By the end of the 70s, the favourable conditions offered to foreign-based business had resulted in the multinationals strengthening their positions to the extent of controlling more than half of total production in such important industries as chemicals, oil products, iron and steel. This unbalanced development of the economy, and the "we're in charge" behaviour of the foreign corporations, caused an enormous deficit in the balance of foreign trade. The government was unable to control inflation, which by the end of the 70s was running at 20 per cent.

The process of democratisation had not been fully carried through; the government pursued a policy of austerity and tried to transfer to the backs of the workers the burdens attendant upon "pulling Greece up", economically speaking, to the level of the other member-countries of the EEC; the Cyprus problem was still unsolved: all these factors increased dissatisfaction among broad sections of the people, and diminished the prestige of the government and the ruling party. This was demonstrated in the results of the general election of 1977, timed by Karamanlis to take place a year before the Parliament's term of office came to an end, with the object of "renewing his mandate".

Although the mass media, as in 1974, represented Karamanlis as the only politician capable of preserving parliamentary democracy, of standing up to both the right and the left, his party, the New Democracy, gained only 41.9 per cent of the vote as against 54.4 per cent in 1974. In spite of the early date of the election having

¹ Later, in 1980, Greek membership of NATO was fully renewed.

caught the opposition to some extent unprepared, the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) placed second and got over a quarter of the total vote, on a programme which called for further democratisation, structural changes in the economy, pulling Greece out of NATO and abandoning the negotiations to get Greece accepted as a full member of the EEC.¹ The Communist Party of Greece achieved notable success; it was contesting an election independently for the first time in its history and it won 9.4 per cent of the vote, with a programme demanding far-reaching social changes in the interests of the working people; the number of Communist deputies was more than doubled (from 5 to 11).²

The municipal elections of 1975 and 1978 also saw considerable successes achieved by the forces of democracy. In many constituencies the candidates of the left opposition parties got majorities. In 1975 there were 8 Communist mayors elected; in 1978—32.

In May 1978 the Tenth Congress of the Communist Party of Greece was held. It called on the democratic forces of the left to work together, the foremost need being for the Communist Party and PASOK to coordinate their actions on the main issues of home and foreign policy. Congress resolutions pointed to the need for further development of actions in defence of the rights of the working class, the peasantry, the workers in crafts and home industries, the intelligentsia and the young people, and stressed the importance of building up a powerful democratic movement of the people. The congress paid considerable attention to the Party's parliamentary work, to the linking up of this with extraparliamentary activity, and to participation by Communists in local government bodies. The First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Greek Communist Party, Harilaos Florakis, in his speech to the congress underlined the fact that since the ruling classes were doing all in their power to limit activity by the masses of the people, and their participation in political life, and to curtail their rights and freedoms, "the front of struggle for democracy is of fundamental importance, from the point of view of dealing with the problems of today and from that of the prospects for socialism".³

Efforts by monarchist, pro-junta and other ultra-right elements to extend their influence aroused alarm, and resistance, within the labour movement and the democratic forces in general. In the second half of the 70s a number of organisations came into being (the National Democratic Union, the National Rally, the Neo Liberal Party, Greek Amnesty, etc.) which were agitating for restoration of the monarchy, rehabilitation of the convicted leaders of the junta, and

¹ *Keesing's Contemporary Archives*, 1975, p. 26893, and 1978, p. 28781.

² *World Marxist Review*, No. 9, 1978, pp. 29-36.

³ *Pravda*, May 16, 1978.

banning of the Communist Party. The ultra-right categorically rejected the few positive steps which the Karamanlis government had taken in building good-neighbourly relations with other Balkan states and developing political and economic links with socialist countries; they wanted the closest possible military co-operation with NATO. In the late 70s they held demonstrations under anti-democratic slogans on more than one occasion.

Activation of the ultra-rights was to some extent helped by the government's hard line towards the workers. At the beginning of 1976 a government bill on labour relations was drafted which set serious limitations on the right to strike. In particular, political strikes were declared illegal, and so were solidarity strikes, and picketing was banned.

In May thousands of workers in Athens, Piraeus, Salonika and other cities went on a 48-hour strike of protest against this bill at the urging of left-wing trade union organisations. One demonstration of ten thousand people was dispersed by the police: over 100 were wounded, one was killed, and about 50 people arrested. In the teeth of resistance from all the opposition parties, the government got this bill through Parliament (Statute No. 330, On Trade Union Freedoms). Employers made use of this law to get rid of unwanted trade union activists.

After that other statutes were passed—On the Procedure for Declaring a State of Emergency and On Legal Sanctions to Be Applied against Persons Resisting Government Authority. There was a special law produced to strengthen government control over the activities of places of higher education.

But this whittling away of democratic freedoms was not enough to restrain the popular unrest stimulated by the growing cost of food, housing and transport, the worsening situation on the labour market, and the increasing burden of taxation. Not only industrial workers, but white-collar workers, peasants, and students all came out in protest at the government's policies. The number of strikers increased. In 1975 strike action had been taken by 352,000 people; in 1976 the figure was 1,340,000; in 1977—1,606,000; and in 1978—3,000,000.¹ They were demanding increased wages and pensions, better working conditions, better social services, an end to sackings, democratisation of the trade union movement, reinstatement of previously sacked activists, etc. An important feature of this strike activity is that the workers of provincial towns were drawn into it, also that strikes at particular work places spread to whole industries or even became countrywide. March 1, 1978 saw a 24-hour general

¹ *Communists in the Midst of the Masses*, Prague, 1981, p. 236 (in Russian).

strike in which over 500,000 people took part. The demands put forward were for higher wages, a five-day working week, and improvements to the social insurance system. There were also actions by working people in defence of trade union rights and freedoms, against the anti-worker policies pursued by the government and the multinationals. In the course of 1979 and 1980 there were determined strike actions by bank employees, industrial and office workers of the state electrical engineering company, and the broadcasting staffs of the state radio and television.

On November 10, 1980, there was a one-day strike in which one and a half million factory and office workers took part. This, the biggest strike for thirty years, paralysed the economic life of the country. The government was forced to make concessions, notably to satisfy the demand made by the trade unions for index-linking of wages to the cost of living (to be implemented for low-paid categories of workers in 1981, and for other wage-earners in 1982). The government also promised to introduce a five-day working week.

A major task for the Greek working class is the achievement of a higher level of organisation. At present only a minority of wage workers belong to trade unions. This is in part connected with the fact that large-scale industrial production still provides only a small proportion of total output in the Greek economy, and that the country is still at a low level of development in socio-economic terms.¹ There are about 3,000 registered trade unions, grouped in 57 federations. Most of these belong to the General Confederation of Greek Labour—GCGL. This confederation, founded in 1918, brought together 389,000 workers in the mid-70s.² The Greek General Confederation belongs to the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU). Most of the leaders of the GCGL are right-wing reformists calling on the workers to “take economic difficulties into consideration and advance only responsible demands”, to “avoid bringing politics into union affairs”, etc. In the late 70s pro-government elements strengthened their positions in the leadership of this confederation, and expelled many organisations from it and from the Workers’ Centres (town trade union branches).

An inflaming fight against right-wing reformism and against the advance of government-controlled syndicalism is carried on by the Communist Party of Greece. The influence of the left wing within the trade unions is growing, and the leading force within the left

¹ Out of a gainfully employed population of 3.2 million, less than a half—1.4 million—were wage-workers, according to the Greek census of 1971. Small or very small firms were the dominant norm in industry. In 1975 84.4 per cent of all undertakings had four workers or less than four and 9.2 per cent had between 5 and 9 wage-workers. See *Year Book of Labour Statistics*, 1976, p. 232; also *The Financial Times*, June 7, 1978.

² *The Europa Year Book 1978*, Vol. I, p. 799.

wing is provided by Communists. A policy of consistent class struggle is pursued by, for instance, the United Trade Union Movement Against Dictatorship—the Workers Together. A part in organising strike actions is also played by the Panhellenic Militant Trade Union Movement of the Working People, and by the Reformed Democratic Working-class Movement. Communists indefatigably stress the need for unity of all the forces of the left, of all those who hold progressive, democratic opinions and fight for the independence of Greece and for democracy and social progress within it.

The current numerical increase in the working class in Greece, and its concentration in big industrial centres, are creating the preconditions for improving its level of organisation and making the ranks of the trade union movement more close-knit. The working class, having played a most important part in toppling fascism, has since the fall of the dictatorship been more active in defence of its rights, and is utilising the democratic institutions and civil liberties already won to make its influence more widely felt throughout the country.

THE WORKING CLASS IN STRUGGLE TO ERADICATE FRANCOISM AND DEMOCRATISE THEIR COUNTRY

The collapse of dictatorships in Portugal and in Greece put right at the top of the agenda the final removal of Francoism in Spain—the last fascist regime left in Europe. And by this time the Franco regime, weakened by the growth of opposition and by the development of the working-class movement, was already in deep crisis.

The working class—recognised by all parties and groups in the democratic opposition as being the main “strike force” in the resistance to Franco’s dictatorship—came into action in the 70s with the experience of ten years of especially fierce class battles already behind it. In spite of the repression employed against them, the organisations of the proletariat, in particular the Workers’ Commissions, continued to grow in strength, and likewise in their ability to unite and coordinate actions on a countrywide scale. The political parties of the working class were also becoming more active.

This growth of the part played by the working class in Spanish society was fostered by changes taking place within the social structure in connection with rapid economic growth (over the years 1964-74 the average annual growth of the GNP was 6.3 per cent).¹ By the mid-70s, Spain had moved up to become one of the top ten capitalist countries, and could no longer be assigned to the category of “mid-developed” capitalism. This had important consequences,

¹ Ramón Tamames, *¿A donde vas, España?*, Barcelona, 1977, p. 29.

the chief of these being an increasing misfit between actual social and economic structures and the old forms of state and social organisation.

Within Spain, now an industrial-agrarian country, manufacturing industry and the service industries were in a state of rapid growth: even as far back as 1960 they had employed 6.5 million people (as compared to 4.7 million in agriculture and fisheries), but by the beginning of the 70s the figure was 8.7 million (as against 3 million in agriculture and fisheries).¹ The old industrial centres were growing at a great rate, and new ones coming into existence, bringing together a concentration of proletarian population, whose numbers were increased principally by migration to these centres from the agricultural areas. And the regions whose economic and demographic importance was thus increasing were precisely those areas—Madrid, Barcelona, the Basque country, the northern and Mediterranean coasts—which had in the past been active centres of the revolutionary working-class and democratic movement. At the same time the “great exodus” from the agrarian regions meant a decrease in the importance of the “backwoods” areas, north and south of Madrid and in the south of the country, where semi-feudal structures and traditional conservatively-minded middle strata were especially strong—the areas which in the past had been the social base for Francoism and reaction of all kinds.

The growth of tourism (35 million foreign tourists in 1973, compared to 6 million in 1960) meant that the service industries were growing more rapidly than manufacturing. And in consequence, the middle strata of the population were increasingly composed of professionals and office employees whose position brought them close in some respects to the working class. “Franco’s heirs fail to take into account,” wrote the well-known sociologist Amando de Miguel, “that in Spain today the stratum consisting of the traditional, non-proletarianised middle classes is now very small. Spanish society is now, as never before, made up of working people. And the extensive groupings of technicians and professionals show a clear leftwards tendency.”² In the class battles of the 70s workers in the

¹ A. de Miguel, *40 millones de españoles 40 años después*, Barcelona—Buenos Aires—Mexico, 1976, p. 46.

² A. de Miguel, *La herencia del franquismo*, Madrid, 1976, p. 250. The author notes that by the early 70s a situation had been reached, in consequence of social and economic change, in which Franco’s supporters were morally the losing side, although they had emerged as victors in the Civil War (see op. cit., p. 250). The main ideals of the Republic, which had inspired the working class, gradually became generally prevalent. This helped to bridge the gap that used formerly to exist between the working class and other social strata in Spain, and to create a more organic unity, increasingly opposed to the Francoist minority.

service industries supported the industrial workers of the factories, as a rule, and showed their solidarity with them. The new technical intelligentsia became a major grouping, losing the "elite" nature it used to have, and more and more often fighting alongside the working class for democracy and for better living standards. Small and middle-ranking businessmen often did likewise. And lastly the members of the liberal professions, also part of the middle class, were by long tradition democrats in attitude, coming close to the positions of the working class.

By the beginning of the 70s, strikes and other forms of action by working people were becoming a feature of everyday life. And the actions were more and more assuming socio-political overtones. The main centres of strike battles were Catalonia, the Basque provinces and Madrid, i.e. areas where the material conditions of the working class were comparatively good and economic demands were not paramount. The most "conflict-prone" industries in the years 1970-74 were iron and steel, and engineering; their workforces were the best-paid and the most politically conscious section of the proletariat.

But the organised labour movement also took in the new areas, and industries hitherto untouched by class struggles. Transformation of the villager into a worker and a city-dweller did not, despite the hopes nourished by the technocrat section of Francoists, fill him with kindly feelings towards the regime. A vital point here was that the recruits to the working class were not in the main peasants proper, but former agricultural labourers, who already had some organisational experience and a fairly high level of class consciousness. At the same time the dynamic migration within the country had the effect of breaking down the previous narrow provincial outlook of the new workers, made them aware of their having a common cause with other victims of exploitation. And, lastly, intensive mobility of labour between Spain and other Western European countries—in both directions—helped to make Spanish workers *au fait* with modern methods of working-class struggle.

The Francoist authorities, realising their inability to halt the growth of the strike movement by repressive measures, were obliged to tolerate it *de facto*. But while displaying great tolerance towards strikes themselves and their rank-and-file participants, the authorities grew more and more ferocious in their dealings with leaders of class organisations of the proletariat. Their main target was the leadership of the Workers' Commissions. The most blatant example of this tendency was the lawsuit "Case No. 1001", which attracted a great deal of attention both within and outside Spain. The defendants arraigned before the court were ten of the best-known leaders from the Workers' Commissions, headed by Marcelino Camacho. On the day the case opened (December 20, 1973)

the President of the Council of Ministers, Admiral Luis Carrero Blanco, was killed under mysterious circumstances.

Ultra-right circles took advantage of this build-up of a crisis atmosphere in order to get the severest possible sentence passed upon the workers' leaders,¹ and compel the government to step up repressive measures against leaders and activists of the democratic and labour movement. But the repressive measures failed of their effect—the democratic movement continued to spread wider. A new Francoist government led by Carlos Arias Navarro tried to manoeuvre, announcing a policy of *aperturismo* ("opening the door" to greater tolerance and dialogue). The Spanish press began to speak of Francoism being "in open crisis". The more far-sighted representatives of the bourgeoisie and the political elite began to come out with open criticism of the regime. The old, set structures, which had in the past ensured hothouse conditions for the accumulation of capital and guaranteed "social peace", were by the 70s ineffective, and were being regarded by both Spanish and international capital as an obstacle—an obstacle, in particular, to integration of Spain into the EEC. Such circles also found it a hindrance to be unable to regulate labour disputes within a legal framework, to reach compromise agreements with representative organisations of the workers.

Another factor pushing the big monopoly bourgeoisie towards modernisation of relations between labour and capital was the beginning of a long-term economic downturn, connected with a fresh, far-reaching crisis in the capitalist world as a whole. Owing to Spain being as yet not fully integrated into the world capitalist economic system, this crisis reached the country only after a certain time-lag, but its consequences were all the worse when it did so. The previous record figures for economic growth fell abruptly, and reserves of gold and foreign exchange were quickly run down—from 6.7 billion dollars in 1973 to 4.7 billion at the beginning of 1977.² Fluctuations on the stock exchange were also considerable; as the Spanish press put it, since 1974 the stock exchange had been stubbornly "voting for democracy": the price of shares rose when current events seemed to foreshadow Franco's departure and a modernisation of social structures, and fell when the indications were going the other way.

A further regrouping of political forces within the country was very much influenced by events in Portugal and in Greece, which demonstrated for all to see how hopeless was the dead end into

¹ The court sentenced the accused to terms of imprisonment varying from 12 to 20 years (see T. N. Baranova, I. M. Mikhailin, *The Working Class of Spain in Struggle*, Moscow, 1978, pp. 71-74 (in Russian)).

² *Cambio-16*, Madrid, No. 277, 1977, p. 55.

which a fascist regime could lead a country, and how great the difficulties and risks attendant upon getting out of such a dead end.

In 1974 the ruling elite stepped up their efforts towards formation of "political associations" (the term used under Franco for political parties) in order to fill the vacuum left by the effective demise of the National Movement—the variegated ragbag of forces which under the Caudillo was the only officially permitted likeness of a ruling party. The big bourgeoisie, which at this stage had no parties of their own, undoubtedly took cognisance of the successes of the Spanish left in the matter of uniting the opposition forces, and of the lessons to be learned from Portugal, where at the moment of fascism's collapse the bourgeoisie had found itself without powerful, experienced parties, whereby the left had been enabled to win strong positions at the start. The concessions which ruling circles were now obliged to make were utilised by the opposition to force the breaches made in the regime even wider—to create, as the phrase then current had it, further "zones of freedom".

One of the fighting demands or slogans under which the labour movement and all the democratic forces were united was the call for a review of the sentences passed in "Case No. 1001". As a result of a broad campaign in which progressive public opinion outside, as well as inside the country, played its part, the sentences originally passed were considerably reduced, so that a number of working-class leaders were released straight away and could take an active part in the struggle once more. May 1974 saw the right to strike officially recognised, albeit with a proviso, "that such strikes be not of a political nature".

The democratic movement rejected the *aperturismo* ploy and that of playing at "political associations"; the slogan under which it really developed was the call for "a democratic break" with Francoism, for the institution of real democratic liberties in Spain. This stage of the struggle showed a clearly marked trend towards united action by the democratic forces opposed to Francoism.

Formation of the Democratic Junta was publicly announced in Paris on June 28, 1974; this was a broad coalition bringing together very diverse groups and parties: the Communist Party of Spain (including its regional organisations, notably the United Socialist Party of Catalonia-PSUC); the Workers' Commissions; the People's Social Party-PSP, formed in the 60s and led by Enrique Tierno Galván; also some of the liberal monarchists and independents. On June 12, 1975, another organisation came into being following an initiative by the Socialists—the Platform of Democratic Convergence (Plataforma de Convergencia Democrática), in which the principals were the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE), the Gen-

eral Workers' Union-UGT, the Federation of Social Democratic Parties, and the Christian Democrats. This coalition, uniting practically all the opposition forces which had not been fit, for ideological reasons, to join the Democratic Junta, was formed largely as a counterpoise to the Junta within the opposition as a whole.

The transition to a new political system after the death of Franco (in November 1975) began with the establishment of the monarchy, the proclamation of the accession of King Juan Carlos I; meanwhile the commanding heights of the economy remained at the disposal of finance and industrial capital, under the aegis of forces linked with Francoism but declaring themselves in favour of reforms. It was the participation in the transitional process of groups and strata on the one hand which were aiming at establishing a moderate bourgeois democracy on the Western European model, and on the other hand of the democratic forces headed by the Communist and Socialist Workers' parties, the parties of the working class, which were demanding a far-reaching reconstruction of Spanish society, that determined many of the special characteristics of the democratisation process in post-Franco Spain.

The first government under the monarchy, led by Premier Carlos Arias Navarro, continued the *aperturismo* ("open door") policy. One of the first actions of the government, intended to reduce political tension, was the release from prison of the popular working-class leaders convicted in "Case No. 1001". A number of other concessions to the opposition were also made. At the same time, though, the government resorted to force on more than one occasion, demonstrations being banned or broken up in a most brutal manner, and leading political or trade union figures being arrested for short periods, including some of those only just released from prison (e.g. Marcelino Camacho). The ruling elite, claiming to stand "above the struggle" and relying on Western help, the support of domestic and foreign capital and that of a large part of the state apparatus (including the armed forces), began to manoeuvre cautiously and skilfully between the forces pressing it on either side—on one side, those of extreme right-wing reaction (known as "the Bunker"), which were demanding loyalty to "the spirit of July 18th" (that being the date when Franco had begun his putsch), and on the other side the forces of the left-wing opposition.

The Democratic Junta and the Platform of Democratic Convergence joined forces in March 1976 to form the Democratic Coordination, which called for "a democratic break" with Francoism; this to include: removal of all forms of statehood and legal norms inherited from the Franco regime; declaration of a wide-ranging political amnesty; the granting of autonomy to ethnic regions; introduction of democratic liberties; legalisation of all political parties; and

the holding of a general election to decide the question of the future form of the state.

In the general upsurge of democracy that took place in 1976, a major part was played by the nationalist movements in Catalonia, the Basque provinces and Galicia, where through long decades of Francoism the denial of political and cultural rights had been felt particularly acutely by the population at large, and where after the dictator's death the slogans of self-determination and autonomy had been advanced particularly actively, going as far as the demand for outright separation from Spain (among the Basques). This movement in favour of democratic change within the country, which took in very diverse strata of the population, also "the increasing incidence of strike actions by the working people, and the working class proper in particular, were a continuing factor of political life, pushing the government in the direction of reform".¹

Of particular importance were the working-class actions of early March 1976; these took place under the leadership of the Workers' Commissions, and were on a scale previously unprecedented. This mass movement acted as a strike force for the political opposition, and was coordinated with it. In the first three months of the year alone, the number of strikes and of strikers was greater than the corresponding figures for the whole of the previous year, and for 1976 as a whole strikes were on a scale unknown in the whole history of Spain. The number of striking workers was six times that for 1974, which had been a record year till then.² These strikes had a marked effect on the country's economy and on capitalist profits: in 1976 eight times as much production was lost (in terms of value) as in 1974. It was clear that, as the eminent liberal lawyer José Mario Armero (who had connections with entrepreneurial circles) put it, "the enterprises are in practice helpless in face of the strikes". He recognised that "the entrepreneurs have realised the full extent of the political shifts of power that have taken place within the country, and have for the most part adopted new positions, going over to direct negotiation with workers' representatives, inasmuch as the old structure of 'vertical' unions has finally collapsed".³ Talks between management and the organisations of the working class were not confined to the level of individual factories or industries. In May 1976, one of the biggest halls in Madrid saw a meeting between the most prominent leaders of working-class organisations and directors of the biggest monopoly concerns—multinationals, state concerns and local private monopolies alike (they included

¹ See T. N. Baranova, I. V. Mikhailin, *op. cit.*, pp. 94-95.

² *Cambio-16*, No. 268, 1977, p. 27.

³ *Gaceta Ilustrada*, December 26, 1976, pp. 30-31.

IBM, Standard Electric, Firestone, Unilever, Ford the Instituto Nacional de Industria, Enasa, Ibelsa, Banco Internacional de Comercio, Banco Intercontinental Español, Hidroeléctrica Española). A constant refrain in the contributions to the discussion made by the employers was the urgent necessity of concluding a "social contract" between labour and capital. The workers' leaders declared that in a situation where the country had no civil liberties, and the relation between workers and bosses was anything but equal, such a contract was not possible. But a pact of another kind—an agreement to work together for the realisation of democracy—was possible and even essential.¹

The demands put forward by the workers were assuming a more and more clearly political character. Their leaders having now gained the opportunity to speak out in the press, stressed in every way they could that the proletariat did not wish to make the country's economic difficulties worse by its actions; more than that, it was prepared to make sacrifices in order to diffuse the crisis. But the working people could not abandon their struggle for trade union and political rights, which they saw as closely linked.

Those actions which the working class did take under the slogans of democratisation of the country, full amnesty for political prisoners, and the legalisation of all political parties and organisations without exception, had a perceptible influence upon the political situation within the country. If the incidence of such actions is plotted against that of governmental measures in this period, it will be seen that many actions taken by the authorities were taken under pressure from the working class. The authorities were obliged to abandon their original plans to preserve certain elements as in the past. The readiness to break with some previous patterns, shown by the ruling elite after Franco's death, was conditioned not so much by an strategic plan for the modernisation of society as by the power of the working-class movement and the flexibility and skill in manoeuvre shown by its organisations. All this made possible a comparatively calm tempo of development in the country's democratisation.

Thus the strikes in the spring of 1976 were the direct cause for the fall of the first government under Arias Navarro, which after one series of concessions and liberalisation measures began to drag its feet, attempting to limit dialogue with the opposition and to use force in order to establish "control in the streets" (the term used by Minister of the Interior Manuel Fraga Iribarne, the "strong man" of that government and a figure of which the bourgeoisie had great hopes). The response to this was a sharp increase in strike actions,

¹ *Cuadernos para el diálogo*, No. 160, 1976, pp. 49-50.

with clashes taking place between workers and police. In July 1976 the government fell, having exhausted its potential for liberalisation.

The monarchy and its supporting bourgeoisie were afraid that the Democratic Coordination might seize the political initiative, and wished to take the heat out of the democratic movement, and therefore found themselves obliged to modify their political line, in the direction of a more definite departure from Francoism. At the same time they bore in mind the fact that supporters of Franco still held strong positions in the state apparatus, the army, and local government, and therefore did their best to bring in liberalisation slowly and cautiously (this was known as *democracia de lo posible* —the democracy of the possible).

The new government, headed by Adolfo Suárez González, made considerable concessions to the opposition; it carried through an amnesty for political prisoners, it opened up wide opportunities for action by the left-wing parties and trade unions, which were de facto recognised to exist, and it hampered to a large extent the interests of "the Bunker". When this series of liberalising measures trickled to a halt and the Suárez Cabinet, like its predecessor, began to drag its feet, the graph of strikes and other actions by the working people again began to show an ascending line, reaching a peak in November. On November 12, 1976, there was the first national general strike since the Civil War, calling for democratisation of the social and political life of the country. The government was compelled to bring in a number of further measures aimed at democratisation. It ceased to put obstacles in the way of practical activity by certain parties, notably the Socialist Workers' Party and the Christian Democrats, and issued a partial amnesty for political prisoners. Some of the general democratic demands (chiefly for a date to be fixed for elections to the Cortes which would work out a constitution for the country) were met by the Political Reform Bill (*Ley y de reforma política*), which was presented to the people in a general referendum. Of those who voted in this referendum, held in December 1976, 94.2 per cent approved the outline of advance towards democratisation presented by the government. The Socialist Workers' Party and the Communist Party, which were still not legally recognised, had called for a boycott of the referendum. Those who did abstain from voting amounted to 22.6 per cent of the electorate.

After the referendum talks were started between the government and representatives of the Democratic Coordination, and in the course of these the conditions were discussed under which a general election of parliament (the Cortes) could take place. At the very first meeting the opposition spokesmen put firmly before Prime Minister Suárez one condition on which the continuation of the

dialogue depended: a full amnesty, and legalisation of all political parties without exception. And Suárez, for his part, showed himself to be in favour of a political compromise with the opposition.

All these shifts in late 1976 and early 1977 were viewed by "the Bunker" as a serious threat to their own positions, which had already become shaky in any case. Having no mass support behind them (in the referendum of December 15, 1976, open opponents of the proposed reforms had gained less than 3 per cent of the votes cast), the ultra-right had recourse to provocation and terror, intended to create an atmosphere of chaos and violence, to destabilise the government and evoke a bloody confrontation. With this object, at the end of February 1977 the ultra-right brought about a wave of terror, in which one week alone saw, in Madrid, the bestial murder of five communist lawyers who had devoted their efforts to defending the interests of the Workers' Commissions, the kidnapping of the President of the Supreme Military Court, General Villacampa, and the killing of three members of the militarised police and the Civil Guard. Although the criminals responsible—young thugs with fascist sympathies from the *Fuerza Nueva* (Young Force) party, the principal organisation of "the Bunker"—were only tracked down a month afterwards, Spanish public opinion immediately recognised this as an attempt by reaction to incite conflict between the working class and its allies on the one hand and the armed forces on the other, at a moment when the government had put the latter under the command of liberal officers who were in favour of reforms.

But the provocation failed of its purpose, thanks mainly to the restraint and coolness shown by the working-class movement. The leaders of all the class organisations of the proletariat met in Madrid and issued a declaration of their resolve to carry on the struggle for democratisation, at the same time demanding that the government take effective measures against terrorism. The funeral of the five communist lawyers, attended by tens of thousands of people including all the opposition leaders, and forming an impressive demonstration of the strength and degree of organisation at the disposal of the left, passed off without a single untoward incident. Activists of the Workers' Commissions had undertaken to be responsible for public order that day. As the press recognised, it all showed who was really in charge "on the streets". It was in this situation that the government took action against right-wing terrorists, the first time in forty years that this had been done in Spain; their stores of arms were confiscated, and a number of leaders of "the Bunker" were arrested, as were, eventually, the perpetrators of the outrage. Right-wing terrorism shuddered to a halt.

All these events confirmed the conclusion that had been reached

back in 1976 by a group of eminent Spanish sociologists: "Now, when the country is facing the necessity of changes, far-reaching changes, the working class has a special part to play in the process of overcoming the current crisis—a part so great that it is the actions of that class which will be to a large extent decisive in shaping the future".¹

The broad general democratic movement, with the working-class parties and the trade unions at its head, exerted a very vital influence on the development of social and political life in the post-Franco period. Unity of action by the leading forces of the opposition compelled the government to complete the process of legalising political parties and trade unions in 1977. The highest point of success for the working class was the legalisation of the Communist Party of Spain, in April 1977. All this meant a break with the Francoist past. An important milestone on this road was the general election of June 15, 1977. In the campaign leading up to the election more than 100 parties and coalitions took part, and the main parties of the left this time abandoned the idea of forming a united front, each one fighting its own independent campaign. The Democratic Coordination ceased to exist from this time on. These free parliamentary elections, the first for 40 years, reflected the contradictory nature of the situation in Spain: on the one hand the working-class movement, and the Socialists and Communists who were its spokesmen, had now become a serious force, a voice speaking with authority; on the other, conservative circles still retained important positions within the country, and they were assisted in this by the continued existence of the old state apparatus, which had not been changed to any significant extent. The forces of the left gained over 40 per cent of the votes cast. Particularly successful was the Socialist Workers' Party, which enjoyed the support of broad masses of the working people that had only just awoken to political life. This Party won 5 million votes, and 118 parliamentary seats. The People's Social Party, which campaigned independently, got 783,000 votes and 6 seats. The very recently legalised Communist Party, which had in its electioneering to contend with the anti-communist prejudices dinned into the masses over decades, gained 1.6 million votes (9.2 per cent of the electorate), and 20 seats. Dolores Ibarruri, President of the Communist Party of Spain, became a Deputy for a mining constituency in Asturias. The neo-Francoist People's Alliance (*Alianza Popular*) managed to gain 1.5 million votes, and to send 16 Deputies to the Parliament. But pride of place went to a variegated bloc composed of moderate and centrist forces—the Union of the Democratic Centre, united around the then

¹ *Documentación social*, Special Issue, April-June 1977.

Prime Minister, A. Suárez, which won 6 million votes (165 seats). The Union of the Democratic Centre formed the new government, albeit without an absolute parliamentary majority.

After the 1977 election the political development of the country, and with it the political struggle, entered a new phase. In that struggle the centre of the stage now belonged to the relations between labour and capital, and to the matter of getting through Parliament a Constitution which would draw the final line to close off the Franco period. The fight put up by the forces of the Left for further democratisation of social, political and economic life was complicated by disagreements among the parties and organisations of the working class. Initially, the chief and immediate enemy for the working-class movement (as for the left opposition as a whole) were those extreme right-wing elements which had been closely linked with the Franco regime. But the leaders of the workers' movement were well aware that the most serious force they would have to contend with more and more often as the pressing tasks of democratisation were dealt with, was industrial and finance capital, which dictated its terms to the ruling elite and in fact was inseparably intertwined with it. This elite, with its close connections with the international monopolies, had already shown itself to be a dynamic force, and one capable of flexibility. Unlike the bourgeoisie of neighbouring Portugal, the Spanish capitalists had acquired considerable experience in the political struggles that had taken place under the Franco regime, and were well skilled in manoeuvre. Not that they were averse to the use of force upon occasion, when felt necessary. This ruling elite concentrated upon creating bourgeois parties of moderate, right-of-centre persuasion, which would take the middle strata of society as their main power base. At the same time it seized every opportunity to diminish the pressure of the organised workers' movement and the entire left-wing opposition and to split it—and in this it showed no small skill, and had some success.

The efforts of the ruling elite were facilitated by a number of objective factors which rendered the working-class movement vulnerable. Up to 1975, the inevitable frictions between the various working-class organisations and left groupings opposing the regime, frictions due to ideological differences, different views on tactics, etc., had been kept to a minimal level because the conditions of the struggle were an overriding factor dictating the need for unity. But under the conditions of legality, with a government showing some flexibility, these frictions began to build up, especially at the top level, among the leaders.

The General Workers' Union and the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party, closely associated workers' organisations, had been powerful

bodies prior to 1939, with rich historical traditions of struggle going back to the late 19th century. In 1972 the old leaders of the Socialist Workers' Party, who had been in exile in France and whose position was sectarian and anti-communist, were replaced after a sharp inner-party struggle by new and dynamic young leaders from Spain itself (the chief of these being Felipe González). The new leadership abandoned the sterile anti-communist policy of their predecessors (who then left the party) and energetically set about re-establishing links with those sections of the working class traditionally sympathetic to the Socialists. The ranks of the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) were swelled by an influx of factory and office workers and intellectuals who felt drawn to socialist ideas but did not, for one reason or another, wish to join the Communist Party. The Socialists in Spain, as in Portugal after April 25, 1974, gained wide support not only within the country but from Social Democracy internationally, which was anxious to create a force to counterbalance the Communists within the left.

The PSOE took up a position further to the left than that of the Portuguese Socialist Party, and one close in many respects to that of the Communist Party of Spain. In the 70s Communists and Socialists (the latter acting in defiance of their old leaders' decisions) had built up considerable experience of united action at grass-roots level, and here ideological friction was practically absent. Alongside the Workers' Commissions, in which the Communists were very influential, a greater rate of activity began to be shown by the General Workers' Union, orientated towards the Socialist Workers' Party. In 1975-77 the General Workers' Union and the PSOE refrained from anti-communist campaigning, while stressing that they still had their own ideological platform, distinct from that of the Communists.

The process of achieving positive changes in Spain proceeded unevenly and by zigzags through 1977 and 1978. It was complicated not only by hostile actions on the part of Big Business and of reactionary elements in the army and the forces of law and order. Especially significant was the fact that this process was taking place at a time of rapidly worsening economic crisis, which brought into being an army of unemployed numbering up to one million, threatened many small and medium entrepreneurs with ruin, and caused galloping inflation. The ultra-right tried to cash in on these phenomena, alleging that they were caused by the country's new political structures. In this way the ultra-right tried to create an atmosphere in which the emergent bourgeois democracy might be done away with, and a return to the old ways of "firm" government brought about. But the circles then in power understood that such a turn of events would throw the country back, deprive it of

any opportunity of developing economic and political links with the outside world, and make the economic crisis worse still.

The sharpness of existing social conflicts and the instability of the political situation made the Suárez government eager to achieve some general, nationwide agreement between the political forces involved. The Moncloa Pact (so called from the name of the Prime Minister's residence, where it was signed) was concluded in late October 1977 by agreement among the political parties (the Union of the Democratic Centre, the Socialist Workers' Party, the Communist Party and the People's Alliance), and was intended to create conditions for bringing the economy out of crisis—a goal that was in the interests of the whole nation and that was meant to avert the threat of the political situation shifting in favour of reaction. In the economic field, the Moncloa Pact provided for such a reform of the country's finance and taxation as would establish tight control over state expenditure.¹

The government agreed to meet some of the demands of the left-wing parties and the trade unions, making important changes in the social insurance system and the health service which the working people insisted were necessary. The trade unions on their side undertook to keep strikes down to a minimum. It was agreed that wage increases should not exceed 20-22 per cent annually, on condition that the government took effective measures to keep price rises on essential consumer goods down to the same level.

The pact was a compromise, to such an extent that it was bound to give rise to criticism from both left and right. The political section of the pact, for instance, was not signed by the People's Alliance. And a number of trade unions, including the National Confederation of Labour (Confederación Nacional del Trabajo—CNT), for their part came out in determined opposition to the economic provisions of the pact. The parties of the left were, however, aware that deterioration in the economic situation was a threat to continuation of the democratisation process: guided by concern to defend democracy, they succeeded in persuading both the UGT and the Trade Union Confederation of Workers' Commissions (Confederación Sindical de Comisiones Obreras—CSCO) to accept the Moncloa Pact.²

The central question of political life was still that of how the country should organise its future social and political structure.

The majority of the political parties which wished to see peaceful development of the democratisation process were willing to observe a "constitutional agreement" over the period (June 1977 to

¹ *Los Pactos de la Moncloa*, Madrid, 1977.

² See Chapter IX of this volume.

December 1978) during which a constitution was to be worked out, discussed and put on the statute book—a constitution which would mark the end of Francoism and outline the framework of a new organisation of society. But when it came to the struggle for influence within the working-class movement, disagreements between the Socialist Workers' Party and the Communist Party grew sharper. Whereas the Communists, after the 1977 election, proposed the formation of a government of "democratic concentration", which would have included representatives of the labour movement as well as of the Union of the Democratic Centre, the Socialist Workers' Party after its electoral successes began to advance its own claims to be an alternative force to the SDC. The Socialist leaders declared that participation in a broad coalition government was something it could accept only under exceptional circumstances.¹ Relations between the CSCO and the General Workers' Union were also exacerbated as a result of increased differences within the trade union movement and the appearance of further bodies within it, and in connection with the changed policies of the left-wing parties.

In April 1978 the People's Social Party was merged with the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party. The latter was aiming to become "a party of government", to achieve a two-party system whereby a moderate left-wing trend would provide the opposition or the alternative to the bourgeois-centrist SDC. Under this scheme of things, the Communist Party would have been left in a secondary political role.

A noticeable change was taking place in the principles and policies put forward by the Socialist Workers' Party. Its claims to the role of a party of government led it to show greater moderation and caution in its practical policy. In the course of 1977 its leaders were busy establishing contact with representatives of the church, the army and the world of finance; they travelled to the USA, Western Europe and Latin America, demonstrating in all quarters their moderation, responsibility and "reliability" should they come to power. In May 1978 Felipe González, the Party's General Secretary, proposed that the word "Marxist" should be dropped from all Party policy documents. Two trends within the party began to be distinguishable—the moderates and the more radical elements.²

The Communists reaffirmed that cooperation with the Socialist Workers' Party was vital in both the short and the long term, and continued to defend their thesis, that "democratic concentration" was the correct policy. From this standpoint the Communist Party

¹ See I. V. Danilevich, "Spain: Social-Reformism at the Crossroads", in *Social-democratic and Bourgeois Reformism Within the System of State-Monopoly Capitalism*, Moscow, 1980, pp. 135-161 (in Russian).

² *Ibid.*, pp. 154-60.

conducted a campaign critical of the Socialist Workers' Party's desire to be one half of a two-party system, arguing that this in fact weakened the effectiveness of the working-class fight to establish democracy.¹

Yet in this new situation the previous tendency to unity in action, on behalf of the interests and the rights of working people, was still maintained and even developed further.² Those congresses of left-wing parties and trade union federations which took place in the years 1977-79 all stressed the need for unity of all democratic forces in the struggle to stabilise the democratic system gradually being established within the country. The parties of the left took part in the formulation and discussion of the new constitution, and united their efforts to get included in its text articles which would affirm the right of working people to strike, to conclude collective agreements, and to form trade unions. Other important propositions were included which gave rights of autonomy to the ethnic regions. In the socio-political campaigning which preceded the referendum (on the Constitution) of December 6, 1978, the call of the parties of the left, and of the trade unions, was for approval of the new constitution, which gave legal force to the democratic changes already under way and mapped out the path of the country's further development along the lines of traditional bourgeois democracy. In spite of the bourgeois character of the Constitution, the rights and liberties which it enshrined were an immense achievement for democratic Spain, denoting a new strage in its social and political development and giving the force of law to its new democratic impetus.

The parliamentary election of March 1, 1979, held under the conditions laid down by the new constitution, confirmed the existing alignment of forces; it demonstrated that the parties of the left were a major political force which must be reckoned with. The Union of the Democratic Centre gained the support of 6.2 million voters (167 seats in the Congress of Deputies) and remained the governing party, though still without a majority in the Cortes. The Socialist Workers' Party retained its position as the second largest political force, gaining 121 seats and receiving about 5.5 million votes (in 1977 it and the People's Social Party together had had 124 seats). The Communist Party of Spain won 1.9 million votes: the number of its seats in the Cortes went up to 23.³

In the municipal elections of April 3, 1979, the forces of the Left won majorities on the local councils of the principal cities—Madrid, Barcelona and Valencia. An agreement was reached on

¹ *Nuestra Bandera*, No. 93, 1978, pp. 64-65.

² See Chapter IX of this volume.

³ *Cambio-16*, No. 380, 1979, pp. 26-28.

April 18, 1979 between the Socialist Workers' Party and the Communist Party on mutual support for candidates for mayoralties and on co-operation on local councils; this meant that the forces of the Left were able to control over 1,500 municipal councils, covering localities which accounted for about 70 per cent of the country's population. A Socialist, E. Tierno Galván, was elected Mayor of Madrid, while a Communist, J. Anguita, became Mayor of Cordova.

Creation of a parliamentary structure and democratisation of the regime to a certain extent took the heat out of the political crisis brought about by the disintegration of Francoism. But these transformations, while bringing political conditions in Spain closer to those prevailing in other, more developed capitalist countries, did not create the political stability on which the ruling class had counted. The struggle was transferred to other arenas. The severe economic crisis the country was living through, accompanied by mass unemployment and inflation, pushed the working class into stepping up its actions to defend its rights and to democratise labour relations. But the differences over tactics between the parties of the left made development of the working-class movement difficult, and considerably more complex than before. Clashes when the Cortes was debating the Statute of Working People (summer 1979-February 1980), and the signing of a Fundamental Agreement between the General Workers' Union and the Spanish Confederation of Employers' Organisations (Confederación Española de Organizaciones Empresariales-CEOE) in July 1979, contributed to a significant worsening of relations within the left camp.¹

The Spanish Socialist Workers' Party, now 200,000 strong, overcame its internal dissensions at its 28th Congress in May 1979 and its Special Congress in September 1979, and maintained its political line of working to achieve political power, rejecting the possibility of governmental coalition with the Union of the Democratic Centre (except under extraordinary circumstances), but at the same time confirming its intention of working together with all democratic forces.

The nationalities question continues to be one of the factors making for instability. The country's left-wing forces are in favour of a democratic solution to the problem of autonomy for the ethnic regions, opposing both the half-hearted measures put forward by the government and the terrorist activities of left-nationalist organisations such as ETA. The situation in the ethnic areas continues to be full of complexities. The local government elections of March 1980 in the Basque provinces and in Catalonia saw success going to the bourgeois nationalist parties.

¹ See Chapter IX of this volume.

Economic crisis, escalation of terrorist activity by right extremists and by nationalist forces, internal strife within the ruling SDC and the consequent weakening of its position—all these created serious difficulties in the way of stabilisation for the social, economic and political structures of Spanish society, and underline the shakiness of the existing balance of forces. SDC policy came under heavier and heavier fire from the left. Demands that the left should be brought into the running of the country became ever more insistent. The left energetically opposed the government's plans to bring Spain into NATO, calling for a national referendum to be held on this question.

Symptomatic of the unstable political conditions was the resignation of the Suárez government at the end of January 1981; it was brought about by conflict among different sections of the ruling class and by pressure from conservative circles to make government socio-economic policies more right-wing. And an example of what the forces of outright reaction can perpetrate is afforded by the attempted coup on February 23, 1981. Under such conditions, the forces of the left are faced by formidable problems if they are to defend and carry further the measure of democracy achieved in the 70s.

There is thus a new nexus of political conflicts in Spain, concerned not with forms of government, as before, but with the content of social and economic policies, and the composition of the ruling bloc.

* * *

The crisis and collapse of fascist regimes in Western Europe was a clear indication of the growing strength of the international working-class movement, of the social and political instability of capitalism, and of the diminishing possibilities for political manoeuvre open to the ruling class. In the past, e. g. the 20s-40s, the discrediting of one of the two methods of ruling employed by Big Business (overt force or bourgeois reformism), as a result of working-class struggle, not infrequently increased the chances of the other method proving successful, but nowadays—at least in developed capitalist countries—simultaneous discrediting of both methods is in progress.

Long-continued resort to overt, dictatorial forms of force in this or that country leads, of course, to popular hatred being concentrated upon that particular one of the ruling class's methods of government. In developed capitalist countries employment of the overt-force method has become not only dangerous for the ruling class, but inconvenient for the purposes of that class. A fascist regime hampers the development of modern production methods, and deprives

management of the flexibility it needs if capitalism is to withstand the challenge of socialism for any considerable period. A terrorist dictatorship places a country in a position of some isolation internationally, indicative of the international solidarity of the working class and of the influence exerted by democratic public opinion. And lastly, an authoritarian regime cannot hold back for long the development of opposition, the activation of the working-class movement. Anti-fascist struggle strengthens unity within the working-class movement, and increases the weight and importance within it of its most consistent and militant sections. Fascism consequently itself creates the threat of a crisis capable of destroying not only the terrorist superstructure, but eventually the whole existing system of exploitation.

The fall of the fascist regimes was a huge victory for the international proletariat and for the international solidarity of the peoples of the world, who had never ceased to give moral and political support to the nations still under the fascist heel. This victory bore witness to the historical inevitability of the fall of fascism in other parts of the world as well, however great the successes it may temporarily seem to enjoy there.

In the 50s and the 60s the main seats of reaction in Western Europe were the FRG with its limited constitutional freedoms, its semi-official revanchist ideology and its militant anti-communism, and those countries still under fascist or other dictatorial regimes. At the end of the 60s, thanks to the struggle successfully put up by the working-class movement and other democratic forces, there was a change for the better in the political line—especially the line in foreign policy—taken by the FRG. Thereafter, in the mid-70s, the last fascist regimes remaining in Western Europe collapsed. The end of dictatorship in Spain, Portugal and Greece deprived European reaction of its bases for organisation of fascist plots and terrorist activities directed against the working-class and communist movement and against democratic institutions. In particular, the removal from Greece and the Iberian peninsula of a number of centres of the Black International's activity was a serious blow to the neo-fascists in Italy. All this assisted the fight put up by the working class in other countries of the West to cleanse their ideological and political atmosphere of anti-communism and right-wing extremism. The general balance of forces was altered.

The actual ways in which fascism crumbled and fell were different in Spain, Portugal and Greece respectively. In all three countries, however, events showed that the fall of a fascist regime provides favourable circumstances for the working-class movement and the left-wing forces generally to come forward as a real democratic alternative to a reactionary regime. This came out especially clearly

in Portugal, where the overthrow of fascism went on to become a democratic revolution, in the course of which the possibility arose of passing on still further, to socialist changes. But here something else was also confirmed: that the dramatic change in the conditions of struggle following the overthrow of fascism creates certain difficulties for those forces of the left which have had no experience of legal organisation; there is a danger of the militant vanguard being lost and swallowed up in the broad masses of the working people, who have only just entered the struggle and have no as yet any political experience.

Events in Spain, Portugal and Greece, all underline with unmistakable force the decisive importance of unity in the working-class movement and the democratic forces generally—its importance in the course of, and for the outcome of, the fight to overthrow fascism; its importance when the Left needs to retain the initiative; and its importance in ensuring broad, mass support for the democratic forces. Those events show how necessary it is for the working class to have a flexible and well-thought-out policy towards the middle strata of society, for it is upon the latter's position that the mass support available to the left forces depends. New forms of unity in action were found and tested in practice. The Portuguese revolution, for example, showed the possibilities, and the limitations, of an alliance between the vanguard of the working class and a progressive section of the armed forces.

Experience also showed that when fascist regimes go into crisis, the ruling class still has certain possibilities for manoeuvre, even for seizing the initiative; that it can learn its lesson, and find ways of keeping itself clear of those forces and methods which have already fallen into disrepute. Unlike the early stage of the Portuguese revolution, the changes which took place in Spain and—even more—in Greece, were more limited in their scope and were made largely under the control of the ruling class, or of political "forces of salvation" backed by the ruling class. This had advantages for that class: first and foremost the old state apparatus could be preserved from destruction; moreover, the ruling elite could also earn a certain amount of political capital for itself. All the same, the course of events demonstrated that the forced, and limited, nature of these manoeuvres becomes progressively more and more apparent, and that the ruling class is always conscious of the threat posed to it by the working-class movement. When a fascist regime has been done away with, the struggle is not over, far from it; new seats of conflict emerge, in which the militant working class is capable of striking heavy blows at Big Business before the latter has had time to build up a firm and stable superstructure for itself.

Chapter 12

GROWING POLITICAL ACTIVITY OF THE WORKING CLASS IN THE SMALL CAPITALIST COUNTRIES OF WESTERN EUROPE, AND IN CANADA, AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

Alongside the sharp intensification of class struggle most unequivocally expressed in the events just considered—the socio-political crises and collapses of fascist regimes—there was from the late 60s onwards a general increase in the political activity of the working class in practically all the developed capitalist countries. There was a growth, of varying degree according to varying concrete circumstances, in the political maturity of the working class, in its readiness to defend its rights and interests, in its ability to administer sharp rebuffs to the monopolies and to the bourgeois state, and to come forward as the true spokesman and defender of national interests. “The strength and prestige of the working class are greater, and its role of vanguard in the struggle for the interests of working people, the true interests of the nation, has increased.”¹

ACTIVATION OF THE WORKING-CLASS MOVEMENT IN THE SMALL CAPITALIST COUNTRIES OF WESTERN EUROPE

For the small countries of Western Europe, a traditional long-standing predominance of reformist ideology and policies, and a wide influence wielded by Social Democratic parties, is a characteristic phenomenon. The majority of these countries did not experience acute crisis situations during the period under consideration, and this had its effect on the forms, scale and tempo assumed by the upswing in the working-class movement. But the reformists were not able to prevent this upswing in the activity of the working class, this being conditioned by trends in socio-economic and socio-political development which are common to the entire capitalist world.

¹ *Documents and Resolutions. XXVth Congress of the CPSU*, p. 34.

In *Belgium*, the focus around which the full force of social conflicts was concentrated in the 60s and early 70s was the national question. Relations between the nationalities within the country had worsened, which led to political instability. Government crises and early elections to Parliament followed hard upon one another (since 1965 not a single Parliament lasted through its normal term of office). Each of the two major parties (the Christian Social Party—PSC and the Socialist Party—PSB) split into two independent regional bodies. New, purely nationalist parties Volksunie or the People's Union in Flanders, Renovation Wallonne in Wallonia, and the Front Democratique des Francophones—FDF—French-speaking Democratic Front—in Brussels) acquired major influence. Questions of national autonomy, the language problem and other aspects of relations between nationalities had reached fever pitch, and nationalist unrest occurred on a mass scale.

Social and economic factors underlay this exacerbation of the national question. The increasingly uneven development of capitalism had produced a sharp change of balance between Flanders, formerly little developed, and traditionally industrialised Wallonia. For Flanders, now in the lead, the question was one of gaining equal rights, while for stagnating Wallonia it was one of struggling to overcome the grim social consequences of that stagnation. The differences between the cultural, historical and ideological traditions of the two regions made relations between them all the worse.

Under such conditions it was a particularly important positive factor that this crisis in relations between the nationalities had not affected the powerful trade union movement (the proportion of unionised workers grew, reaching 71 per cent in 1975). The positions of the Belgian General Federation of Labour (Fédération Générale du Travail de Belgique—led by the Socialists and based mainly in Wallonia) and the Confederation of Christian Trade Unions (Confédération des Syndicats Chrétiens, with its main base in Flanders) came very much closer together, largely due to the latter becoming more radical, and co-operation between them became established. Under the influence of the "great strike" of 1960-61 the trade union movement's demands became more far-reaching: the much-too-general slogan of "structural reforms" was replaced by a more concrete programme of democratic change (including autonomy for the national regions); demands for "a say in management" (participation in consultative bodies on which workers and management were equally represented) were revised to demands for control over working conditions and organisation of production in the factories.

From the second half of the 60s onwards, the strike movement in Belgium built up continuously. A new phenomenon was the par-

ticipation of clerical workers, trained engineers and technicians in strikes. In 1970 the number of man-days lost through strikes was considerably more than one million.¹ Strikes at the ACEK works, the Michelin factories, and in the pits of the Limburg and Swartberg areas were very stubbornly contested. The workers achieved major successes in the fight to get wages raised, to stop sackings and to improve the assistance available to the unemployed. They also put up an effective fight against the attempts of multinationals operating in Belgium to acquire the status of something like "foreign concessions", in which the rights of the trade unions in their plants would be subject to limitations, and organisational methods alien to Belgian industrial practice could be introduced. Considerably less success attended the unions' efforts regarding general government policy on social and economic issues—inflation and democratic control over the economy.

Despite the build-up of mass action by the working-class movement, the greater demands made by the working class and the instability of the political situation generally, the working class achieved no significant gains in the field of democratic reforms. The only major reform achieved was the system of regional autonomy introduced in 1971 in place of the previous unitary state. But even here the practical application of the reform was delayed and bedevilled by the centralist policies of the bourgeois parties.

The main reason why the positive changes already observed in working-class struggle were not carried over into the political field for such a long time lies in the continued predominance of reformist attitudes, as evinced primarily in the Belgian Socialist Party and likewise in the even more moderate Christian Social Party, both of which retained their dominant political influence on the working class. The Christian Social Party firmly rejected the "democratic alternative" line in social and economic policy which had in practice been advocated by the trade unions, striving to keep the now overdue reforms within a state-monopoly framework. The Socialists officially took up the call for structural reforms, but in practice, since they took part in coalition governments alongside the Christian Social Party, they supported its policies in the main. The federal principle which was officially proclaimed by both these parties as the basis of their policy on the nationalities, in practice remained on paper. The narrow reformist viewpoint adopted by these two parties left them helpless in face of the rising wave of petty-bourgeois nationalism. Thus when there was a swing of working-class voters away from the Christian Social Party and the Socialists, it

¹ M. A. Neimark, *The Belgian Socialist Party: Ideology and Politics, 1945-1975*, Moscow, 1976, p. 334 (in Russian).

went as a rule not in favour of the Communist Party but to the nationalist parties which confined their programmes to the demand for federalism. Between 1961 and 1974 the proportion of the electorate supporting the Christian Social Party dropped from 41.5 per cent to 32.3 per cent, and that supporting the Socialist Party from 36.7 to 26.7 per cent, whereas the nationalist parties' share of the vote (in an electorate where from 15 per cent to 30 per cent of the voters belonged to the working class) went up from 3.5 to 21.2 per cent.¹

Yet the undoubted activation and leftward swing of the mass working-class movement could not but have some effect upon the positions of the country's main political parties. The working-class movement, which even in the 60s had accumulated a rich store of experience in the fight against unemployment, was not inclined to take lying down the social consequences of the economic crisis of 1974-75, which left Belgium with one of the highest unemployment rates in the Common Market. The influence exerted by the Catholic trade unions on the Christian Social Party became stronger. In the mid-70s there was a certain movement to the left within the Belgian Socialist Party, assisted to a large extent by the "French example"—the success achieved by the French Socialists through unity in action of the forces of the left. Popular feeling compelled the Belgian Socialist Party to abandon co-operation in government with the right-wing leaders of the Christian Social Party, and to go into opposition. The Belgian Socialist Party's congress of autumn 1974 adopted a charter in which the main slogan was unification of progressive forces. The Socialist Party advanced demands for wide regional autonomy, and gave up its previous discrimination against Communists. The 1975 Socialist Party Congress approved an alternative programme of measures to combat the crisis, a programme which found favour with the Communist Party of Belgium. It envisaged state controls on the operation of the banks and the power industry, the introduction of planning principles into industrial production, priority for the development of public transport, etc.²

But the leftward movement of the Belgian Socialist Party did not go so far as to represent a turn in favour of class-oriented, anti-monopoly policies. The influence of the party's right-wing leaders, pressing for a return to participation in government and for continuation of the old opportunist policies, remained very strong. The anti-communist prejudice still present within the party also had its effect. Citing the comparative weakness of the Communist

¹ *Keessing's Contemporary Archives*, 1961-1962, p. 18108; and 1974, p. 26533.

² *The International Working-Class Movement (A Handbook)*, Moscow, 1978, p. 154 (in Russian).

Party as their reason, the Socialists saw as their main ally not that Party, but the left wing of the Catholic movement. The Socialist Party rejected the Communist proposal to hold talks on unity in action, on the grounds that agreement with the Catholics had not yet been reached.

The lack of unity among the forces of the left affected the results of the parliamentary elections. At the elections of April 1977 and December 1978 the Socialists continued to lose votes, while the Christian Social Party strengthened its position. This swing to the right at the polls had the effect of making the Socialist Party go back to its old policy of co-operating with the moderates. Socialist ministers assumed office alongside those from the Christian Social Party (which was now divided into autonomous Flemish and Walloon sections) and from the nationalist parties. The Socialist Party in practice put up no fight within the government for a change in economic policy. At the same time Socialists continued to object to "extremism" in measures to combat the crisis, primarily against the executive bodies being given special powers to make economies in social expenditure without parliamentary sanction; they also continued to insist on regional autonomy being made a reality. The differences between the various members of the government coalition made the latter's existence very insecure, and in the late 70s there were prolonged government crises. A contributory factor here was the stepping-up of the trade unions' fight against unemployment and for a shorter working day. The masses of the workers were not prepared to take Socialist participation in government as a reason for observing a "social truce".

Disagreements between Socialists and Christian Socials finally brought about the resignation of the Tindemans government and a pre-term parliamentary election in December 1978. But this fresh election did not get rid of political instability in Belgium. The positions of the main parties remained unchanged for the most part (Socialists—25.4 per cent, Christian Social Party—36.3 per cent).¹ The Christian Social Party got two more seats, the Socialists lost two. The voters showed their distrust of the Socialist Party's waverings in policy. A right-wing party, the Liberals, got four more seats. The Communists regained two seats lost at the previous election.

Even after the election, however, the political situation in the country remained unstable, as evidenced by periodic government crises in the late 70s. Coalition governments composed of Socialists, Christian Socials and Liberals were faced again with the un-

¹ *Social-Democratic and Bourgeois Reformism Within the System of State-Monopoly Capitalism*, Moscow, 1980, pp. 229, 231 (in Russian).

solved problems: the unstable economic situation, rising unemployment, the pressing need to carry through the already outlined constitutional reform providing for autonomous administrative bodies for Flanders and Wallonia.

The Communist Party of Belgium has been making energetic efforts to improve relations between the forces of the left, to achieve political unity of the working class, and to combat reformist and conciliatory tendencies. The Communists have a concrete and detailed programme for anti-monopoly transformations which they have put forward for the consideration of Socialists and other groupings within the working-class movement. As a first step in realising this programme the Communists have proposed a number of economic measures forming an alternative to the government's plan for overcoming the crisis, one which would protect the gains already made by the working class. The Party sees these proposals as its contribution towards achieving unity of action by the forces of the Left, primarily by Communists and Socialists, which would make it possible to mobilise the broad masses of the working people to fight for demands advanced by the Left as a whole.¹

The general balance of forces within the country had not yet changed in favour of the left parties as the 80s approached. But compared to the 50s and 60s, the working class had undoubtedly taken a step forward as regards development of its political consciousness, and had advanced to new positions, which in the conditions of political instability now characteristic of Belgium is disturbing to the ruling class.

In the *Netherlands*, the working-class movement in the late 60s and in the 70s had as the background to its development an increasing instability in the system of state-monopoly capitalism, with symptoms of crisis making their appearance in that system's party-political machinery, but with the ruling class making unceasing efforts to go over to the offensive and attack the gains previously made by working people.

Modern Holland is a country of highly-developed industry and agriculture. In the post-war years she was considered in the West to be a model of "social peace". The working-class movement was comparatively weak, contributory factors here being the rather high proportion of the population belonging to the petty bourgeoisie; the fact that the trade union movement was split; the existence of strong social-reformist tendencies within the working class; and the high degree of skill and speed in social manoeuvre shown by the ruling class. The country lies in an advantageous position geograph-

¹ See Louis Van Geyt, "For Unity of the Forces of the Left", in *Pravda*, January 18, 1977.

ically, at the intersection of trade routes; its economy has become specialised in such branches of industry as electronics and chemicals, which makes its products highly competitive in foreign markets; and it has robbed its colonies of immense wealth (it was only at the end of 1975 that the last major Dutch colony—bauxite-rich Surinam—finally achieved independence). All this has ensured vast profits for the monopolies, profits which have given them ample space for social manoeuvre.

But in the late 60s Holland, like many other highly-developed capitalist countries, entered upon a period of sharpening social conflicts. The policy of continually raising prices pursued by the giant monopolies which dominate the country's economy—firms such as Royal Dutch Shell, Unilever, Philips, and AKZO—led to an increase in strike actions. In the late 60s and early 70s there were strikes by engineering workers, textile workers, dockers, agricultural workers, and office employees. When in September 1970 the total number of those on strike rose to over 152,000, the authorities threatened to declare a state of emergency so as to "restore order in the country". Working-class resistance to the state-monopoly "incomes policy", and to the government measures freezing wages, grew greater. There were moves towards greater unity within the trade union movement.

In the 70s definite signs appeared of a concentration and polarisation of political forces—a very remarkable phenomenon, in view of the traditional abundance of political parties without significant differences in their programmes. On the one hand, the church-based parties—the Catholic People's Party, the Anti-Revolutionary Party, and the Christian-Historical Union—which for the most part represented the interests of big business, began to operate as a single bloc (known as the Christian Democratic Appeal), with a programme of freezing wages and reducing expenditure on social services in order—so they said—to bring down inflation. On the other side, the influence of the social democratic Labour Party was growing.

The Labour Party, which had a considerable part of the working class behind it, owed its successes in the 70s in no small part to a leftward swing within it, especially on matters of foreign policy, observable from about 1967 on. At its later congresses within this period the Labour Party repeatedly declared itself in favour of reducing Dutch commitment to NATO and bringing down military expenditure and condemned the attempts made by NATO to keep up military and political tensions internationally. At the same time, anti-communist attitudes within the Labour Party remained strong. The 15th Congress of the Labour Party, in April 1975, rejected a proposal from the Communist Party that they should form an alliance.

In March 1977 government ministers belonging to the Catholic People's Party and the Anti-Revolutionary Party refused to support a bill intended to curb land speculation, and there was yet another government crisis. But pre-term parliamentary elections, held on May 25, 1977, failed to produce any significant change in the balance of political forces.

The fact that no single party had won an absolute majority of parliamentary seats increased political instability. In spite of the great success which the Labour Party had achieved at the polls, all attempts to form a coalition government in which the leading posts would again be held by that party came to nothing. This, the longest government crisis in the country's history (206 days) was finally ended by the formation on December 19, 1977, of a coalition government composed of ministers from the church-based parties and from the People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (the Liberals), under the premiership of Andries van Agt of the Catholic People's Party. But even though a government had been brought into being, the internal political situation remained involved and unstable. "The government of Holland staggers on from crisis to crisis", noted the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*.¹

The gradual polarisation of political forces is still under way, and discontent with NATO's militaristic plans continues to grow. The right-of-centre government, without sufficient support in Parliament and torn by internal dissensions, has been obliged to manoeuvre with a wary eye on the working-class and democratic movement, and the latter restrains the government from making any significant move to the right in home or foreign policy.

Among the left-wing parties in Holland, the Communist Party is the only one consistently upholding the interests of the working people. The Communist Party is carrying on the difficult struggle to combat the influence of the bourgeois and reformist parties upon the working class. In the situation as it is today, Dutch Communists see their main tasks as being: to show up the dangers of anti-communism; to build up the Party's links with the masses; to step up work in the factories and within the trade unions. The Communist Party of the Netherlands took the initiative in starting and encouraging a wide popular movement against the neutron bomb.

At the 27th Congress of the Netherlands' Communist Party, in 1980, it was noted that the first duty of Communists now was to work for the creation of a progressive majority within the country, with the object not merely of strengthening the opposition but of bringing about a serious change in government policy both at home and abroad. The appeal for this, voiced from the platform of

¹ *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, Zurich, February 28, 1980, p. 5.

the Congress, was addressed to members of the Communist Party and likewise to the leadership of the Labour Party, the Radical Political Party, the Pacifist Socialist Party, and to other progressive groups and individuals—that they should co-operate to form a progressive majority by means of direct action everywhere: in the towns and districts, in suburbs and in villages, in local councils and in Parliament.¹

The economic crisis of 1974-75 was not without its effect even upon such a small state as *Luxemburg*—highly industrialised, and lying in the very centre of capitalist Europe.

The Communists of Luxemburg are fighting hard to hinder the capitalists from loading the full weight of the crisis on to the backs of the working people. The Communist Party of Luxemburg takes the view that the current situation of the country calls unequivocally for genuine unity of the forces of the left, and an ever increasing number of the workers are coming to take the same view. The Communists of Luxemburg see it as their main task to apply all their efforts to bring about this joining of forces, which could prove to be an important milestone along the road to socialist change. At their 23rd Congress (May 31-June 1, 1980), the Communists once again called on all national and democratic forces, all organisations within the working-class movement—above all the Socialists—to join together in the struggle for peace, democracy and social progress.

In 1965 two trade union federations which had previously operated under the leadership of the Communist Party and of the Luxemburg Socialist Workers' Party respectively, were amalgamated, and working-class influence on the life of the country showed a noticeable increase. "In fact, unity was the key to the successful general strike of October 9, 1973, which was called on Communist initiative in support of trade union demands for new wage agreements. Without this unity there would not have been the 40,000-strong solidarity demonstration in the capital. The biggest trade union action since the 30s, it was a decisive factor in wresting concessions from big capital," wrote René Urbany, Vice-Chairman of the Communist Party of Luxemburg.²

A farther step in the direction of overcoming the fragmented state of the trade union movement was the creation, in early 1979, of a still more comprehensive body—the Independent Confederation of Trade Unions of Luxemburg. This comprises more than 40,000 trade unionists. And, although its general orientation is reformist and the dominant influence within it is that of the Luxemburg Socialist Workers' Party, its programme contains a number of demands which,

¹ See *Pravda*, April 7, 1980.

² *World Marxist Review*, No. 11, 1976, p. 5.

if met, would mean a considerable curtailment of the scope for arbitrary action available to the monopolies (e.g. the demand for equal participation in management by the workers, and for selective nationalisation of some firms within the private sector).

There have been twists and turns in the relations between the political forces of the working-class movement. In 1970 a municipal council was elected in Eich—the country's second largest city, and a centre of the working-class movement—which was composed of Communists and Socialists, with a Mayor who was a member of the Communist Party; and there was subsequently a split within the Luxemburg Socialist Worker's Party. The right-wing Socialist leaders who rejected totally the idea of any co-operation with Communists first of all set up a faction of their own within the Luxemburg Socialist Workers' Party, as a mark of protest against such co-operation, and later announced the formation of a new body—the Social Democratic Party of Luxemburg, with an openly anti-communist programme.

This re-alignment within the ranks of the Socialists did not, however, lead to a significant change in the policy of the Luxemburg Socialist Workers' Party as a whole. At its first congress after the split-off, in June 1971, it declared that it was prepared only to make "tactical" coalitions with "other parties", at the same time making clear its opposition to "ideological and political alliances", and its rejection of the idea of a united front of the left including the Communists.

The Communists have been waging a resolute struggle against the attempts of big business to open up an offensive against the positions which the workers have won. This offensive is reflected in the results of the parliamentary election held on June 10, 1979. This was not a success for the Socialists, who gained only 14 seats out of a total number of 59. The opposition Christian Social People's Party won 24 seats (six more than at the previous election). The Democratic Party won 15 seats. The two last-named parties formed a new coalition government of Luxemburg.

For the working class of *Ireland* the 60s and 70s saw the problem of unifying the country coming to the fore. The working-class movement was also obliged to react to the rapid invasion, from the early 60s onwards, by the transnational corporations which had already consolidated their position in Northern Ireland. As a result of this expansion, and of Ireland's entry into the Common Market, the working class in Ulster and in the Irish Republic found themselves being exploited by the same monopoly conglomerates. From the second half of the 70s onwards inflation and unemployment have been shooting up, and the strike movement has grown. If in 1975 about 300,000 man-days were lost through strike action, in 1979 that figure

went up to a record 1.5 million man-days.¹ The Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU), formed in 1959, has displayed greater militancy; this body brings together unions from both sides of the border, 75 in the Republic and 37 from the North, comprising a total of 650,000 workers in the late 70s.² In the spring of 1980 the ICTU held its annual conference in Belfast, thus laying down its challenge to the split of the working-class movement which is the policy aim of ruling circles in Great Britain. The ICTU devotes a lot of attention to Ulster, where tension has increased since the Thatcher government came to power. The ICTU's call is for a peaceful, democratic solution to the problem on the basis of equal rights for all citizens of Northern Ireland; it rejects violence and terror.

In the vanguard of the fight for a democratic solution to the Ulster problem marches the Communist Party of Ireland—CPI. In March 1970, at an Extraordinary Congress of Unification, the Communists of North and South re-built a single, united Communist Party. In the situation prevailing today, as the Party's General Secretary Michael O'Riordan has said, much depends upon bridging the divisions which separate the Irish and British working people, and those which separate the workers' movement and the national liberation movement.³ The 17th Congress of the CPI (February 1979) defined the tasks of the Party in the struggle to re-unite the country and to achieve democratic change and social progress.⁴ The Congress formulated a line aimed at unifying all the democratic forces of North and South irrespective of their religious affiliation.

The Scandinavian countries—*Norway, Denmark and Sweden*—differ from the other countries of Western Europe in that Social Democratic parties have been in government there, almost without a break, for a period of many years. The Norwegian Labour Party—DNA has been in power, with only brief intervals in opposition, since the 30s. The Swedish Social Democratic Labour Party—SAP—never relinquished the helm of the ship of state from the end of the war until 1976. The political stability of state-monopoly capitalism has been assured by this very dominance of the Social Democratic parties, which have a powerful organisational machinery and wide mass support. The membership of the Scandinavian Social Democratic parties, taken together, numbered about 1.3 million at the end of the 70s.⁵ The degree of unionisation among workers is

¹ *Yearbook of Labour Statistics 1980*, p. 639.

² *History of Ireland*, Moscow, 1980, p. 369 (in Russian).

³ See *The Building of Socialism and Communism and World Development*, Sofia, 1978, p. 340 (in Russian).

⁴ *Unity* (Belfast), No. 9, 1979, p. 6.

⁵ The SAP—over 1 million, the DNA—over 160,000, the Social Democratic Party of Denmark—125,000.

extremely high. The grip of reformist ideology upon the Social Democratic parties and the trade unions has resulted in the level of strike action being one of the lowest in Western Europe.

Thanks to the high level of organisation of the labour movement, and to economic conditions favouring their countries in the post-war period, the Scandinavian working class has been able to win itself a standard of living higher than that in most other Western European countries. Trade union pressure has resulted in far-reaching measures to ensure a higher level of employment. A shorter working week, the establishment of a special fund for vocational training (in Denmark, 1973), highly-developed systems of social insurance and other social reforms, especially extensive in Sweden, have without doubt improved the situation of the working class and of the poorest strata of the population in general, and have assisted the popularity of the Social Democratic parties.

But these successes of "Scandinavian socialism" were achieved without encroachment on the power and weight of big business. Scandinavian "democratic socialism" has in no way affected the power positions of capitalism in these countries, on the contrary, it has given capitalism greater flexibility and manoeuvrability.¹

An inevitable consequence of the Social Democrats' policy of reform was the increased level of tax on personal incomes. The proportion of the GNP provided by taxation became higher in Sweden and in Denmark than in any other highly developed capitalist country. And in Denmark the burden of taxation was considerably increased by entry into the Common Market in 1973.

The comparative stability, over a long period of time, of the parliamentary positions of the Social Democratic parties—in Denmark and in Norway this lasted until the mid-60s, and in Sweden until the latter half of the 70s—was never such as to lessen the struggle for political power or the keen rivalry between Social Democracy and the bourgeois opposition at election times. For a long time the attack mounted by the right had no success. But a time came when the Social Democrats were frequently compelled to yield governmental place to bourgeois coalition cabinets. Norway led the trend, in 1965. Then Denmark followed suit, in 1968, and Sweden in 1976. But political differences among the bourgeois parties prevented them from working out a single line and from keeping the Social Democrats out of power for any considerable period.

The failures of Scandinavian Social Democracy were symptomatic of "the erosion of the middle ground", of a certain polarisation of class forces. Of course this trend is still very weak in Scandinavia

¹ See O. K. Timashkova, *Scandinavian Social Democracy at the Present Stage*, Moscow, 1978 (in Russian).

as compared to other capitalist countries. None the less it is obvious that the former comparative stability in the politics of the Scandinavian countries, in which the main factor was the predominant influence of Social Democracy, has been replaced by political instability, pregnant with new trends in political life and new combinations of political forces.

These complex and contradictory political processes became apparent first of all (from the mid-60s on) in Norway and in Denmark. These two countries are less rich and developed than Sweden, where Social Democracy has relatively more space for manoeuvre, and it was in them that signs of bankruptcy began to appear in what Social Democratic governments had to offer politically. The negative features of the situation began to loom large: inflation, rising taxation, a "crisis of ideals" among young people disenchanted with the pragmatism of the Social Democrats.

In parallel with the weakening of the influence exerted by the Social Democratic parties one can observe, from the beginning of the 70s, an increase in the prestige of the Communists, a noticeable strengthening of their positions in the trade union movement, and some success by Communist candidates in parliamentary and local community elections. But at the same time considerable sections of the masses displayed a sort of bewilderment and were unable to find definite political points of reference to steer by, and this intensified the atmosphere of political crisis.

The catalyst for the crisis symptoms in the political development of Norway and Denmark was the fight over the question of whether those countries should join the Common Market. In September 1972 the Norwegian voters rejected their Social Democratic government's proposal that Norway should join the Market, and that by a majority of 54 per cent of the vote. The run-up to the referendum was the occasion of the most serious and heated political discussion there had been for many years. It emerged that there was a vital difference of opinion between the leadership of the Norwegian Labour Party and of the trade unions on the one hand, and a considerable portion of the working class on the other, the latter fearing that entry into the Common Market would lead to further price rises and to foreign monopolies having full freedom to do as they liked. Many students and farmers came out against the Common Market. In the words of one of the leaders of the Norwegian Communist Party, "The political level has been raised by the Common Market debate. . . . The workers no longer automatically accept what the Social Democrats propose. The confidence in the Social Democrats is not quite so strong."¹

¹ *Morning Star*, January 19, 1973.

Some opponents of the Common Market left the Norwegian Labour Party. Together with the Communists and the left-wing Socialist People's Party they formed the Socialist Electoral Alliance, whose platform included: nationalisation of the banks and the entire credit system, also of all key branches of industry; measures to be taken against further price rises; and pulling the country out of NATO.

The success achieved by the Socialist Electoral Alliance in the elections of September 1973 (11.2 per cent of the vote, and 16 seats) led to the idea being advanced of its transforming itself into a single party. But the left-wing Socialists within the Alliance refused to recognise Marxism-Leninism as the ideological basis for a new party. Under these circumstances the Communists considered it impossible for them to dissolve their existing party, and declared themselves in favour of retaining the Alliance as an association of independent parties. "An artificial organisational unification," as was noted by Martin Knudsen, Chairman of the Communist Party of Norway, "without political and ideological unity, would only bring about a fresh struggle between the parties which have up to now taken part in the Socialist Electoral Alliance, and then within the Socialist Left Party"¹ (that which now had been created out of the Electoral Alliance).

On the eve of the parliamentary elections of September 1977 the Communists approached the Socialist Left Party with a proposal that they come to an agreement on working together. But this proposal was not accepted by the Left Socialists, and the left-wing forces of the working-class movement were once again disunited, and this showed in the results of the election. The Communists gained no representation at all in the Storting, in spite of their previous electoral supporters remaining loyal. And the representation of the Socialist Left Party went down sharply (to 2 seats). Meanwhile the Norwegian Labour Party, which had taken as the central planks of its platform the promise of measures to guarantee employment and to overcome the country's economic and financial problems, improved its position, gaining 76 out of the 155 Storting seats (42.4 per cent of the vote). But the bourgeois parties again won 75 seats. So once again the Social Democrats were only able to remain in power through the support of Socialist Left deputies. The country's political instability continued.

In Denmark, unlike Norway, a referendum (in 1972) produced a vote sanctioning entry to the Common Market, but there too political stability was to be no more. The first year of Denmark's integration into the Market brought with it increased inflation, and great

¹ *Partiinaya zhizn*, No. 24, 1976, p. 72.

er deficits in the balances of trade and payments.¹ The parliamentary election of December 1973 was held in the midst of an energy crisis, and was notable for the major setbacks of almost all the parties previously represented in Parliament. Apathy and passivity among the workers, who were disenchanted with the policies of the Social Democrats, and rampant discontent among the middle strata, together led to success for two newly created parties (the Progress Party and the Centre Democrats) which had campaigned under demagogic slogans, promising greatly reduced taxation, less state interference, and "scope for private initiative". These two parties together won almost one quarter of the total vote. One positive result of this election was that some of the votes lost by the Social Democrats (who gained only 25.6 per cent of the vote as against 37.3 at the previous election) went to the Communists, who won six seats, thus returning to Parliament after a nearly fifteen-year-long absence. But the bulk of the lost votes went not to the left, as had happened in Norway, but to the right, to the parties reflecting the reactionary "revolt" of the middle strata. Thus did the narrowly reformist, class-collaboration policy of the Social Democrats bring under threat the positive results achieved by working-class struggle.

At the succeeding elections in 1975 and 1977, Social Democracy was able to win back only a part of the lost votes. At the same time, though, the bourgeois governments which had come to power following the defeat of the Social Democrats were also unable to assure themselves of a stable parliamentary majority. A sharp rise in mass struggle against their manifestly anti-worker policies repeatedly forced such governments to resign and give way to the Social Democrats; but, lacking a parliamentary majority, they pursued policies of manoeuvre and compromise with the bourgeois opposition. The results of the election campaign of 1979 brought some strengthening of the Social Democratic positions in Parliament. The Communists just failed, by some 3,000 votes, to retain their parliamentary representation.² In the elections to the European Parliament in June 1979 the highest number of votes went to the Movement for Withdrawal from the EEC, uniting various organisations including the Communist Party. A high degree of political instability, then, was characteristic of Denmark's internal situation also.

This collapse of political stability, the crisis over the way forward for Social Democracy, produced an activation of the Danish working class, as was evidenced not only by a general build-up of the strike movement, but by the first general strike that had taken place for many years (spring 1973). Economic crisis and mounting unem-

¹ See *Denmarks Statistic. Statistik årbog 1975*, Copenhagen, 1975, pp. 286-91.

² *World Marxist Review*, No. 4, 1980, p. 87.

ployment brought about a further stepping-up of mass struggles. Within the trade union movement, especially at lower-leadership level, a certain degree of unity in action was achieved despite differences in political outlook. At the same time, though, at the level of national politics even the desperate need for united Left action to prevent power passing into the hands of the bourgeois parties did not stop the Social Democrats of Denmark (as of other Scandinavian countries) from preferring to align themselves on a number of issues with the liberals—though in this instance they did not, it is true, enter into any permanent governmental coalitions with them.

The increasing discontent and activity of the mass of the people had some positive effect on the positions of the Social Democrats. Aware of the inadequacy of the "welfare state" ideology under crisis conditions, the Social Democrats felt obliged to stress in their programmes slogans on "industrial democracy" and worker participation in management, also proposals for more public control over the economy and even for certain changes in property relations. In 1971, for instance, the Danish Social Democratic Party sponsored a parliamentary bill on creation of a special capital investment fund which would be jointly administered by the state and the trade unions; but the bill never became law. Plans for creating a trade union investment fund were widely discussed in Sweden also, from the mid-70s on.¹ In 1973 the 40-hour working week was legally introduced in Sweden, and in 1974 another law provided new guarantees against sackings.² But both in the trade unions, and even more in the Social Democratic parties, the spirit of reformism and class collaboration is still very strong, which makes further development of the working-class movement very difficult, and leaves its mark on all the gains made by the working people and on the partial reforms carried through from above.

The struggle for united action by the working class and all the democratic forces is likewise one of the main trends in the activity of the Communist Party of Denmark.

The 24th Congress of the Party (1973) approved two documents—a resolution "Into Struggle with Monopoly Capital" and an action programme for the years immediately ahead—"The Programme of the Communists in the Struggle for a Better Life".³ In 1976 the Danish Communist Party held its 25th Congress. In its Report to Congress the Central Committee stressed the correctness of the Party's general line and drew attention to the role of the

¹ See *Kollektiv kapital bildning genom löntagarfonder. Rapport till LO-kongressen 1976*, Lund, 1976.

² B. Furåker, *Stat och arbetsmarknad*, Stockholm, 1976, pp. 180-81.

³ *Folketinget. Handbog*, Copenhagen, 1977, pp. 391-96.

Communist Party in organising the major united actions by the forces of the left which had done much to help bring about the fall of the bourgeois government in 1975. The Congress approved a new Party programme. The fundamental task at the present stage, notes this document, is to develop the activity of the working class in all possible ways, and to achieve a considerable extension of the Party's influence among working people, mobilising them in the struggle to bring Denmark out of NATO and the EEC, improve world security and halt the arms race.¹

The Communist Party of Denmark carried the formulation of its programme further at its 26th Congress in 1980. The documents approved by the Congress set out the actual tasks facing the party in the political, social, economic and cultural fields. To carry through these tasks the Party requires, as its Chairman, Jørgen Jensen, noted in his report, to step up its political and ideological work; to develop and enrich Marxism-Leninism as the theoretical basis of that work; to develop further the Party's struggle for detente, disarmament and peace and for proletarian internationalism, and its propaganda of the achievements of existing, real socialism.² The Congress noted that in the world today it becomes particularly important to strengthen international solidarity, especially between Communist parties. The Congress adopted a specific action programme capable of attracting support from those forces which are seeking a democratic solution to the crisis. It is stressed in the Congress documents that the measures proposed by the CPD should be associated with further struggle to achieve the transformation of society along socialist lines.³

Sweden also saw the appearance of the same new trends which had earlier made themselves felt in Norway and Denmark. The Swedish Social Democratic Party, the most influential among its peers in Scandinavia, in 1968 achieved the culminating point of its electoral successes—the notorious 50.1 per cent of the vote, the dream of every Social Democrat. During the 70s it began to lose votes, and at the parliamentary election of 1976 these fell to the lowest level recorded since the war (42.9 per cent of the electorate), which caused it to lose governmental power. The bourgeois parties had been able to turn the pre-election debates of 1976 to their own advantage; in these, questions such as ecology, taxation, participation by trade unions in the raising of joint-stock capital and subsequent control over this by the unions, had been in the centre of attention.

The fact that some of the voters withdrew their support from the Social-Democrats was on account of dissatisfaction with the fiscal

¹ See *Pravda*, September 27, 1976.

² *Land og Folk*, April 5-6, 1980.

³ See *World Marxist Review*, No. 7, 1980, pp. 79-80.

policies of the previous Social Democratic government, and with its decision to build atomic power stations. And some of the first-time voters, young people between 18 and 20, were led astray (as were some other, former supporters of the Social Democrats) by the prognostications of the bourgeois parties that all individual initiative was going to be stifled, that all of economic and social life was going to be "run by the state". But the balance of forces produced by the results of this election was still not such as to ensure stable government by the bourgeois parties.

The bourgeois coalition government which came to power in September 1976 when the Social Democrats lost the election, a government in which the Prime Minister was the leader of the Centre Party, Thorbjörn Fälldin, found itself faced straight away with serious economic difficulties. For the first time in all the years since the war, there was an absolute fall in Sweden's gross domestic product, while industrial production had been falling for three years running (1975-77); unemployment was running at the level of 1.6-2.2 per cent of the workforce; and consumer prices were rising fast. The bourgeois government's inability to cope with these economic problems was compounded by the disagreements among the parties making up the coalition. These disagreements were particularly sharp over the matter of building atomic power stations. The Centre Party came out against the development of nuclear power engineering. This led to the resignation of the Fälldin government in October 1978; it was replaced by a one-party government under the leader of the People's Party, Ola Ullsten. The Ullsten Cabinet was able to remain in office only thanks to indirect support from the Swedish Social Democratic Labour Party, which abstained when a vote of confidence was taken.

At the parliamentary election of 1979 the Social Democrats increased their representation in the Riksdag, having won 43.5 per cent of the vote. This election also showed Communist influence on the increase; the Communist Party got the best results for thirty years (5.6 per cent of the vote, and 20 seats).¹ But this success on the part of the workers' parties was still insufficient to make formation of a Social Democratic cabinet possible, and again the new government was formed by the bourgeois parties.

After the disaster at the U.S. atomic power station in Harrisburg in the spring of 1979, the Swedish Social Democratic Labour Party abandoned its stance of unqualified support for plans to develop atomic power engineering; like the People's Party, it demanded that a national referendum should be held on this issue in 1980. The

¹ This refers to the Left Party-Communists. In the 1979 parliamentary election candidates were also put up by the Workers' Party-Communists (founded in 1977), which got 0.2 per cent of the vote.

Social Democrats were anxious to exploit the shakiness of the bourgeois government's position; the latter had no constructive plans for solving the socio-economic problems, and the Social Democrats intended to gain electoral support on this account and so prepare the ground for a return to power. This was helped along by the discussions taking place in the party, in youth organisations, and in the trade unions, on the ways in which social problems could be dealt with. The Swedish Social Democratic Labour Party was doing its best in its fight for voters, especially young voters, to create an impression that it had changed over recent years, that its image was now quite different; one point on which it laid great stress was its stand on foreign policy. A certain hostility to Communists still prevails, though in the ideological field anti-communism has become less apparent. Social Democrats still cling to the thesis that they keep to "the middle of the road" between communism and capitalism.

In the foreign policy of Sweden, though, progressive notes have indeed been sounded more and more strongly by the Social Democrats under the premiership of Olof Palme. His government was notable for the sharp protests it made against American policy in Vietnam. U.S. interference in the internal affairs of other sovereign states, small ones in particular, has evoked great indignation in Sweden. The general public had its influence on the formulation of an active foreign policy, leading to a remarkable association of mass movement and government action. A great part in activating the masses has been played by Communists, whose aim has been to attain a firm alliance of all progressive forces on a platform of resistance to imperialism.

The governments of all the Scandinavian countries were forthright in their condemnation of the military coup in Chile, describing it as "an annihilation of democracy". The movement for solidarity with the Chilean people has reached imposing dimensions; those participating in it have collected money and materials to help the victims of the fascist coup.

The peace movement in Scandinavia is very widespread and operative. This is true of Sweden especially, where it reaches out to very diverse sections of the population. The Pentagon's plans to introduce a new type of nuclear weapon—the neutron bomb—caused protest committees to spring up in opposition. Olof Palme, Chairman of the Social Democratic Labour Party, declared in a speech made to a trade union conference of civil servants (September 1977) that the neutron bomb was a weapon which eroded the distinction between nuclear and conventional weapons, and thus increased the danger of nuclear war.

Strong and continuing anti-militarist attitudes are found also in

the ranks of the Norwegian Labour Party. In both Norway and Denmark the movement for withdrawal of these countries from NATO is gathering strength. In Norway a wide range of social groups, students, trade unions, and youth organisations support it. At the head of the fight in Norway are the Communists, who propose, as an alternative to their country's membership of NATO, that Nordic Europe as a whole should be made a "peace zone", offering true security to all the countries of the region.

The working-class movement in *Finland* exerts a great influence on the foreign policy of their country.

A feature specific to Finland is the mass nature of both the workers' parties, the Communists and the Social Democrats. Co-operation between the two, starting in 1966, was at first a matter of sporadic contacts only. This was undoubtedly connected with the fact that at that time the Finnish Social Democratic Party had not yet abandoned the line, in economic policy, that the interests of big business must not be infringed—which contradicted its own declared aim, defence of the workers' rights. The influence of the right wing of Social Democracy was still evident in foreign policy also.

None the less, in 1966 the electoral success achieved by the Social Democratic Party (which had already moved left to some degree) meant that the two workers' parties together, Communists and Social Democrats, had a parliamentary majority, and the question was then on the agenda, would they work together in government (along with the Centre Party, led by Urho Kaleva Kekkonen until the latter was elected President).

At its 14th Congress, in 1966, the Communist Party approved an Economic and Political Programme of the PCF for the Immediate Future. There were points of contact between this programme and the corresponding Social Democratic programmes; the Communist programme called for: an extension of democracy in economic life, greater rights for working people at factories; the state to take a greater hand in running the economy; control of investment and of import and export of capital; reform of the tax system; and measures to guarantee employment. So it was possible for the Congress to reach the conclusion that "the PCF considers it desirable, in the interests of the working people in today's situation, that all forces of the left should reach agreement together on a joint policy serving the interests of the working class".¹ The PCF proposed that a joint programme should be worked out, in which the Paasikivi-Kekkonen line in foreign policy should be further pursued, while in home policy the line should be for democratisation. The position of the

¹ SKP n. 14 *edustajakokous*, Helsinki, 1966, p. 50.

PCF was that governmental collaboration by the three parties would be a step towards the formation of an anti-monopoly coalition.

These aims were only partially realised. The government in which Communist ministers took office was operating (1966-71) under difficult conditions, brought about by economic decline, an unfavourable balance of trade, and confusion in state finance. The right-wing elements in the Social Democratic Party and the Centre Party maintained that the government should cope with the economic problems largely at the expense of the workers, by pursuing an austerity policy. The addition to the government of representatives of the Finnish People's Democratic League was not accompanied by any such upsurge of mass struggle as might have given them a supporting base. As Taisto Sinisalo, Vice-Chairman of the Communist Party of Finland, subsequently observed, some forces within the government were anxious to make the Communists "mere executors of their political will".¹

Nevertheless, the participation of Communists (as members of the People's Democratic League) in the government did yield some positive results. First and most importantly, the progressive line in foreign policy was reinforced: economic links with the USSR were further built up, and the Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation and Mutual Assistance between the USSR and Finland was extended for a further term. Other beneficial consequences were the extension of the state sector in industry (in the chemical, iron and steel, and automobile industries), and improvements in the social insurance system. A reform of the educational system was begun, a 40-hour working week was introduced, paid leave was increased to four weeks annually, and legislation on labour contracts was reformulated to give all workers a guaranteed minimum wage as provided for in collective agreements in individual industries, and severance pay.

Communist participation in government also had the effect of bringing closer together the rank-and-file members of the Communist and Social Democratic parties, which became a favourable factor in the mass struggles of the 70s. In 1969 there was an amalgamation of trade unions, following an agreement reached between Communists and Social Democrats. In 1971 the 10th Congress of the Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions approved a programme which reaffirmed, for the first time for many years, its commitment to socialism.

And this, the sole example of Communists taking part in government in Western Europe during that period, was of immense international significance in breaking down a long-standing taboo and helping to erode anti-communist prejudice.

¹ *World Marxist Review*, No. 5, 1972, p. 10.

There was a value, too, in the negative as well as the positive experiences of this Communist participation in government. It had proved impossible, by virtue of the circumstances mentioned above, to get an anti-monopoly policy carried through in the economic field. The other parties participating in government had not yet been ready to bring about far-reaching democratic changes. In the late 60s-early 70s there was a noticeable exacerbation of class conflicts, and a growth in the strike movement. In 1969 there were 158 strikes, with 83,000 workers involved (3 times as many as in the preceding year), and the number of man-days lost was 161,000. In 1970 the number of strikes went up to 240, but the number of those taking strike action was down to 20,000, and the man-days lost down to 15,000;¹ in 1971 all records for fifteen years were broken: 838 strikes, 403,000 strikers, 2,711,000 man-days lost.² Restructuring of the economy, the increasing concentration of capital, and inflation—everything affected the interests of working people very painfully.

It was disagreements over social and economic policy which brought about the fall of the coalition government. Further development of unity in the working-class movement could come about only on the basis of a joint anti-monopoly programme.

In Finland as in the neighbouring Scandinavian countries a mass anti-war movement had a great impact; this was grouped around the Finnish Peace Supporters organisation, which took the initiative in the movement for solidarity with Vietnam and in the fight for disarmament and the banning of nuclear weapons and the neutron bomb. The Peace Supporters, working together with political parties and public organisations supporting peace, detente and disarmament, played a great part in ensuring that Finland became a country contributing much towards making peace more secure internationally.

At the time of the American aggression in Vietnam, there was a mass movement in Finland for solidarity with Vietnam. In the 70s other mass organisations came into being expressing solidarity with and support for the peoples of Southern Africa, Chile, etc., and a number of broad movements working against war. Finnish Communists were among those taking the lead in starting these organisations.

At the parliamentary election of 1975 the Communist Party achieved further successes, increasing its number of parliamentary seats to 41, i.e. four more than at the previous election. In December 1975 the Communist Party of Finland received the formal request from President Kekkonen to take part in a coalition government along with representatives of the Social Democratic Party, the Centre Party, the Liberals, and the Swedish People's Party. It agreed to

¹ Erkki Salomaa, *Ammattiyhdistysliike Tänään*, Helsinki, 1971, p. 188.

² *Year Book of Labour Statistics*, 1972, p. 751.

do so. The Party's position was that the principal task facing the new government was to bring down the sharply increased rate of unemployment. But since this government had no mutually agreed programme, it proved unable to apply policies which could solve pressing economic and social problems in the interests of the workers. In this situation the Communist Party decided, in 1976, that it could not take any further part in the existing government.

However, after a few months it rejoined the government, and advocated a foreign policy based on the principles of peaceful coexistence, on the preservation and further development of the good-neighbourly relations between Finland and the Soviet Union. It fought also for measures to combat unemployment, and to speed up economic development primarily by building up and diversifying the state sector of the economy; it supported an expanded housing programme, action to restore the balance of foreign trade, to keep down prices, to improve social security and to introduce a more equitable tax system.

Finnish Communists take as their point of departure the situation actually prevailing in the country—the activation of the forces of the right and their drive to depress the living standards of the workers and to neutralise their gains in the area of democratic rights—and concentrate their attention upon the actual issues around which struggle is in progress, while striving always to link up current tasks with long-term goals.

The 18th Congress of the Communist Party of Finland, in 1978, analysed the situation in the country at that time and on that basis approved a political document entitled *For a Democratic Turn*, dealing with home policy and offering a programme of political and economic changes which would not only improve the conditions of the mass of the people but create the preconditions for the struggle for socialism. The Congress underlined the importance of further strengthening the Party's unity, of extending its influence among the mass of the people, and of organising resistance to the right-wing attack upon the political, economic and social rights and interests of the working class and of all working people.¹

The work of the Finnish Communist Party in raising the level of class consciousness among working people, and in furthering the unity of the working class and of all anti-monopoly forces, became even more important in the situation created by the parliamentary election of March 18-19, 1979, which saw the forces of reaction strengthening their position. The right-wing National Coalition Party won support at the polls. The parliamentary representation of the bourgeois parties went up from 106 to 113 seats, and that of the workers' parties was reduced.

¹ *SKP n. 18 edustajakokous*, Helsinki, 1978, pp. 18-45.

This election took place in a complicated situation, politically and economically speaking. The country was still feeling the effects of economic crisis, and the number of unemployed was in excess of 150,000 (6 per cent of the able-bodied population).¹ This situation was exploited by right-wing bourgeois circles, who played upon the voters' discontent to strengthen their own position. But the right did not succeed in radically altering the parliamentary balance of forces. The new government was headed by a Social Democrat, Mauno Koivisto. The governmental coalition included representatives of the Social Democratic Party, the Finnish People's Democratic League, the Centre Party and the Liberal People's Party. The Democratic League held three ministerial portfolios.

Another country where, as in Scandinavia and the FRG, Social Democracy was in the forefront of political life in the 70s, was *Austria*. But the fact that this was so did little to change the country's long-established mechanism of "social partnership". This had come into being at the time of "the great coalition"—a governmental alliance between the bourgeois Austrian People's Party—ÖVP and the Socialist Party of Austria—SPÖ, an alliance which remained in existence for 20 post-war years.² In recent years, it is true, the conflicts within this coalition have become sharper, but this has been the result, not of any leftward move within the Socialist Party, but on the contrary of a more active drive by the Austrian People's Party, which has striven to rule on its own, and to return a number of state-owned industrial enterprises to their former Austrian and West German capitalist owners. The Socialists were obliged to resist these plans.

At the election of 1966 the Austrian People's Party succeeded in defeating the Socialists, abandoned the "great coalition" and took over the helm itself. The legislation which it got through regarding the nationalised enterprises opened up distinct possibilities of their being reprivatised. These measures, and other things such as higher prices and rents for housing, were not met with any determined resistance on the part of the Socialist Party, which saw the preservation of "class peace" as its main objective. This is the explanation of the low level of strike activity which still prevailed at this time. The attitude of the new Socialist Party leader Bruno Kreisky likewise did little to mobilise the working class. The only goal that the Socialists had to set before the working people was the prospect of victory at the elections.

¹ *Kommunisti*, No. 11, 1980, p. 827.

² For a more detailed account see: G. Ardayev, "Social Partnership and the Bureaucratisation of Austria's Political Life", in *Social and Political Changes in Developed Capitalist Countries*, pp. 204-18; also E. Wimmer, "The Mechanism of 'Social Partnership' in Austria", in *Rabochii klass i sovremennyy mir*, No. 1, 1976, pp. 91-103.

Victory was gained by the Socialists at the parliamentary election of 1971, but it led to no essential change in the situation. The policy of "modernisation" pursued by the Socialist government of Bruno Kreisky meant no more than a furbishing up of the state-monopoly machinery of government. What social reforms were brought in were insignificant in scale and were made on the basis of temporarily favourable economic circumstance and the government's possession of certain funds in reserve; they did not affect the interests of the monopolies in any serious way. Prices continued to rise as before, there was still no solution to the housing problem, and the tax reform which was put through by the Socialists worked mainly to the benefit of big business.

In foreign policy the government's line in the main was in accord with Austria's State Treaty and Status of permanently neutral state. The government repeatedly reaffirmed the vital importance of both these instruments, which increased its authority in the country. The Austrian Socialist Party declared itself—though not always consistently—in favour of international detente and reduction of military confrontation in Europe, and reacted positively to many peace initiatives by the socialist states in various parts of the world.

In the 1975 election the Socialist Party again won an absolute majority of the votes cast—50.4 per cent, as compared to 43 per cent for the Austrian People's Party—and it again formed a single-party government under Bruno Kreisky. The election had been held at a time of economic recession, with an atmosphere of general insecurity and fear for jobs. Many voters hoped that the Socialists would be better than the People's Party at keeping down unemployment and ensuring economic well-being. The Socialists were again successful at the polls in May 1979, indeed they achieved their best electoral results of the post-war period, receiving over 51 per cent of the vote.

The Socialist Party of Austria, with over 700,000 members (in 1978), is the largest political party in the country. The Socialists wield decisive influence over the working class and occupy the key positions in the main trade union organisations.

In May 1978 the delegates to the Socialist Party's 24th Congress unanimously approved a new long-term programme. In assessing this document, the Chairman of the Communist Party of Austria, Franz Muhri, stressed that despite its essentially reformist nature, it contains a number of correct and urgent demands, although the latter do not, from the standpoint of the Communist Party, amount to any movement towards doing away with capitalist institutions.¹

Austrian Communists support joint action by all the democratic

¹ See *Volksstimme*, May 28, 1978.

forces to gain satisfaction of the workers' just demands for better living standards, improved social conditions, lower prices and local rates, and a reduction in the burden of taxation. The KPÖ calls for reductions in expenditure on armaments, and re-direction of the resources thus released to provide housing, schools and hospitals. It fights for equality for women and for national minorities (within Austria there are tens of thousands of Slovenes, Croats, Czechs and Slovaks); it fights against the re-activation of neo-nazi forces which attempt to drum up chauvinistic, pan-Germanic feelings within the country. But the Party's work proceeds under difficult conditions, due to the dominance of reformist traditions and the practice of "social partnership".

With the aim of activating the struggle by the working class and the other sections of the working people, of presenting to them a clear alternative to the existing order of things, Austrian Communists have been engaged in working out a new Party programme, which was brought before the general public for discussion after its approval at the 24th Congress of the KPÖ in 1980. The need for a new programme is dictated by the fact that the country is in the grip of more severe symptoms of crisis, accompanied by a sharp reduction in the scope for removing these by reformist manoeuvre. Communists believe that it is essential to put forward as an alternative to "social partnership" the need for struggle, basically anti-monopoly struggle, to gain extension of democratic rights and civil liberties, and solve the urgent social and economic problems so characteristic of Austrian life today, which will be in the interests of the broad masses of the working people.¹

In *Switzerland* also there has been relatively little sign of any general tendency towards activation of the working-class movement. Explanations for this can be found in various specifics of the country: above all, a fairly unconcentrated location of industry, with small and medium-sized enterprises predominating; there are also long-standing traditions of bourgeois democracy; the country stands rather isolated from European politics; and its population is heterogeneous as regards nationality. A factor of no small importance in maintaining the hold of reformist attitudes over the minds of wide sections of the proletariat has been a favourable economic situation, prevailing over a long period of time, which has kept wages and incomes high.

Over the last several decades, the working-class movement in Switzerland has been in thrall to the concept of "social partnership". Ever since 1937, when the first agreement was signed between the Swiss association of the entrepreneurs of the metallurgi-

¹ See *World Marxist Review*, No. 8, 1980, p. 35.

cal and watch-making industries and the appropriate sectoral trade union, "peace agreements" were extended to cover other branches of industry, and have set the tone for Swiss labour relations. These agreements provide for settlement of all conflicts by negotiation between entrepreneurs and workers, with the results enshrined in binding documents.

The biggest trade union organisation in the country is the Swiss Federation of Trade Unions, which is organised on the territorial-industrial principle and brings together 16 unions covering different industries; the membership of these was in May 1980 463,000, or over half the total number of unionised wage-workers. Besides the Federation there is the Federation of Swiss Societies of Salaried Employees (with about 150,000 members), and there are also Catholic, Evangelical, autonomous and independent trade unions bringing together about 300,000 workers; prominent among these is the Swiss Confederation of Christian Trade Unions (with over 100,000 members).¹ The Swiss Federation of Trade Unions works closely together with the Social Democratic Party, which is the country's biggest political organisation. On the principal issues of home and foreign policy, the Social Democrats adhere to positions close to those of the bourgeois parties. But at the same time, the Party enjoys the support of a considerable portion of the working class. In recent years left-wing tendencies have gained strength among some members of the Social Democratic Party, especially the young people. In the Romansh-speaking cantons the Social Democratic Party's regional sections take a more left-wing position.

Although only a minority of workers are organised in the trade unions (20-25 per cent of all employed persons in the economy), the reformist policies of the trade union leaders influence the behaviour of the general mass of workers. Since the working class is to a large extent fragmented, most of its members living in small and medium-sized towns and retaining strong links with craft industry and agriculture, it is possible for the trade union leadership to sell their class-collaborationist policy to the mass of the workers.

Owing to the influence of this conciliatory policy of the trade unions, strike action has never in the course of a long period been used to any significant extent. Occasional wild cat strikes are met with disapproval from the TU leaders, who refuse financial assistance to workers taking part in them.

But in recent years the trade union leadership has been finding it more and more difficult to carry on their policy of "social partnership". In a situation where the Swiss entrepreneurs are making use of the presence of numerous foreign workers employed in the

¹ *Annuaire statistique de la Suisse*, Geneva, 1977, pp. 391-92.

country as a lever to force through tougher lines when faced with demands from their native workers, and are making more active attacks upon their social rights, discontent with their leaders' policies is growing among the rank-and-file trade union membership. More and more frequently workers are demanding an end to class collaboration, and a "re-legalisation" of the right to strike in resistance to the employers' drive to cut back the social gains previously made by the working people.

The collaborationist policies of the trade union leadership were displayed with especial clarity in the mid-70s, during the economic crisis. Although by and large the slump affected Switzerland less than other countries, it was not immune to rises in the cost of living and in the number of unemployed.¹ Relying on the growing fear among the workers for the safety of their jobs and still clinging to their own line of "social partnership", the trade union leaders succeeded in holding back social conflict. Whereas at the beginning of the 70s the unions had been able to compel the employers to agree to wage rises of 10-13 per cent, in 1975 their demands had come down to 7.5 per cent, and in 1976 to only 2 per cent.

In spite of the collaborationist policies of the trade union leadership, however, the dissatisfaction among working people which has been characteristic of all capitalist countries in recent years has manifested itself in Switzerland also. A very striking expression of this is provided by the stormy protests among young people which shook the country in the spring of 1980 and after. The youth movement, despite all its heterogeneity, amorphousness and lack of clear-cut objectives, has none the less been a characteristic expression of the growing tendencies towards social protest.

A consistent, class position in the struggle for the rights of working people is taken up by the party of Swiss Communists—the Swiss Party of Labour. It has worked out a clear-cut programme of its own, considering all the questions concerning the socio-economic situation of the workers in all their close connections with problems affecting the nation as a whole.

¹ It should be borne in mind that the data on the numbers of those officially registered as unemployed in Switzerland (0.4 per cent of the workforce, or 15,000 workers) do not give a fair picture of the effect of the economic crisis on the country's working class. In the course of it, the number of jobs available fell by 11.5 per cent. Those who suffered most from the shrinkage of employment were the foreign workers (between August 1973 and August 1977 330,000 of them had to leave the country, the number of foreign workers falling from 980,000 to 650,000), the pensioners (20,000 of them were forced to give up their jobs) and the women (approximately 25,000 of them reverted to the status of housewives). Partial unemployment became widespread, that is, putting workers on a shorter working day or working week. Since the crisis began, there has been the first actual fall in the value of real wages to have taken place since the war.

The 11th Congress of the Swiss Party of Labour, in May 1978, again stressed the determination of Communists to achieve greater unity among working people under attack from the monopolies, which seek to off-load all the hardships of the economic crisis on to the backs of the workers, and the Party's resolve to mobilise both blue- and white-collar workers in the fight against sackings, inflation, and attacks on the democratic rights and liberties of the people. "Our Party," said General Secretary Armand Magnin, "spares no effort to unite all the popular and progressive forces of the nation and promote consistent cooperation with the organisations representing these forces, while respecting their independence and identity."¹

Although at the election of 1979 the Swiss Party of Labour gained only three seats in the national parliament, in a number of the cantons (especially the French-speaking ones such as Vaud, Neuchâtel and Geneva) it is an influential political force. For the first time in Swiss history a Communist—R. Dafflon, a member of the Party's Political Bureau—became Mayor of Geneva, in 1979.

From the end of the 70s onwards the trend towards consolidation of the left forces has been showing itself more and more clearly, opening up prospects of increasing their political influence. Some real experience of co-operation in the country's National Council is on record between the representatives of the Swiss Party of Labour and those of the Autonomous Socialist Party (left-wing Socialists basing their position to a large extent on Marxism). In October 1979 the Swiss Party of Labour, the Autonomous Socialist Party, and the left-wing party known as the Progressive Organisations of Switzerland, announced their desire for closer alliance. Their representatives declared their intention of putting forward a joint "socialist alternative to the policy of big business and the bourgeoisie". At the end of 1979 agreement was reached by these parties on formation of a joint parliamentary group.

ACTIVATION OF THE WORKING CLASS IN AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND AND CANADA

Signs of activation of the working-class movement were to be observed in the 70s not only in the small countries of Western Europe, but also in the developed capitalist countries of the Pacific zone, Australia and New Zealand. After many years of government by bourgeois parties power passed (true, for a short time only) into the hands of Labour parties based primarily on the working class.

¹ *World Marxist Review*, No. 7, 1979, p. 18.

In *Australia* 23 years of government by bourgeois parties, the Liberals and the Country Party, were broken on December 2, 1972, when the Australian Labour Party was victorious in a general election, gaining 49.7 per cent of the vote and 76 parliamentary seats out of a total of 125. The Australian Labour government pursued a dynamic foreign policy. Not only did it refuse further support to the Saigon regime, recalling all the Australian military advisors, it established diplomatic relations with the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, the German Democratic Republic and the People's Republic of China, ratified a treaty on non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, and issued blunt condemnations of the racist governments of South Africa and Southern Rhodesia.

The Labour government under Gough Whitlam took up a constructive attitude on questions of peace and international security, detente, the fight against colonialism, and relations with developing countries; it strove to improve relations with the Soviet Union and other countries of the socialist community. But at the same time it repeatedly reaffirmed its support for ANZUS and its "loyalty to its American allies".

The Labour government passed some measures limiting the freedom of action of foreign monopolies. Specifically, they tried to establish state control over exploitation of the country's vast mineral wealth, and to build up the part played by the state sector in the mining industry.

In the socio-economic field Labour brought in a number of measures to improve the position of working women, pensioners and the disabled; wage rates were raised, a system of state medical insurance was introduced, and opportunities of higher education were improved for young people from poorer backgrounds.

Major steps were taken to improve the conditions of the Aborigines: the government removed all discriminatory limitations on their civil rights and, moreover, recognised their rights over the so-called tribal lands and the minerals found on these; state expenditure on education and medical care for the aboriginal population was increased considerably.

The economic and social legislation of the Labour government and its positive moves in foreign policy met with fierce opposition from the principal bourgeois parties—the Liberals and the Country Party. In order to deal with their obstructive tactics in parliament the government dissolved both houses and held an election (May 1974). Again Labour were victorious. But they did not succeed this time in gaining a majority in the upper house. Reaction unleashed a massive anti-Labour campaign throughout the country.

The programme of reforms initiated by the Labour government started at a favourable time for the country's economy, on the crest

of a boom. The Australian Labour leaders hoped to demonstrate in practice that it was possible to run a capitalist economy in the interests of working people and of the whole nation, through state intervention. A sharp decline in the country's economic prosperity (a high rate of inflation and swiftly increasing unemployment, with the number of jobless exceeding the 300,000 mark already in early 1975), directly linked with the general slump overtaking the capitalist world, caused the government not merely to slow down the realisation of its programme, but to go into reverse during their last year in office. The worsening economic situation was accentuated by a drop in the capital investments made in the Australian economy, the response by foreign monopolies to the Labour government's measures to ensure the country's economic independence.

Under pressure of economic difficulties, the Australian Labour Party's opportunism and inconsistency became apparent. At a federal conference of the Party in Terrigal (February 1975) the leadership succeeded in gaining acceptance for an economic programme including incentives to private industry at the expense of the state sector. The principal objective of the programme was said to be the ensuring of profitability to private enterprise, "within the framework of a mixed economy". In his report to the conference James Cairns, Deputy Prime Minister and Treasurer, declared that although capitalism was an exploiter system and many of the people's rightful wishes remained unsatisfied under it, nevertheless, since the jobs of the majority of the population depended upon private industry, the government ought in general to apply policies that were in the interests of the private sector. The Labour government asserted that the biggest cause of inflation was rising wages, and came out in support of what was in effect a wage freeze. In the final analysis, the Labour leaders saw the way out of the economic difficulties as lying not in any attack upon the positions of monopoly capital, but in government assistance to entrepreneurs. And they also declared their readiness to tone down their measures of constraint over foreign capital.

But this was not enough for the Australian bourgeoisie. As the slump deepened capitalists tried to shift its full weight on to the backs of the workers. They called for measures to "restrain" the trade unions, for a sharp reduction in state intervention in the economy, and for the repeal of most of the statutes limiting the freedom of action of foreign capital. They feared that under pressure from the workers the Labour government might go too far along the road of socio-economic reforms and that might threaten their class positions.

In October-November 1975 the opposition used their majority in the Senate to hold up for a month the passage of allocations for the

state apparatus, thus paralysing the government. The constitutional crisis created in this way was settled by what Gough Whitlam described as a coup, Australian style. On November 11 Governor-General John Kerr dismissed Gough Whitlam and his Labour government, dissolved both houses of Parliament, fixed a date for interim elections and appointed a caretaker government to function until those elections, with the Leader of the Opposition (Liberals and Country Party), Malcolm Fraser, as Prime Minister.

The Australian monopolies and the foreign companies operating in Australia were delighted by the Governor-General's action. The *U.S. News and World Report* noted that "Representatives of U.S. firms—which have a 4.5-billion-dollar investment in Australian industry—privately expressed satisfaction."¹ The stock exchanges of Melbourne and Sydney reacted to the fall of the Labour government by a rise in the price of shares.

The removal of the Labour government, running counter to the established Australian parliamentary patterns evoked a wave of indignation. In the early days of the election campaign, which got under way from mid-November, some Labour supporters called for mass demonstrations to press for a Labour victory. The leadership of the Party did all it could to confine workers' discontent within parliamentary bounds. It conducted the election campaign under the slogan of "saving parliamentary democracy", advancing no essential programme for dealing with the economic problems.

The Liberal-Country Party coalition called for "defence of free enterprise against the threat of socialism", and for greater co-operation with "our old allies" (i.e., Britain and the USA). Labour's opponents laid responsibility for the country's poor economic situation squarely at the door of the previous Labour government, accusing it of bad management. The bourgeois press addressed itself to the most backward sections of the electorate, with scare stories that a Labour victory would mean "the end of the Australian way of life", "dictatorship", etc.

When the election came, on December 13, 1975, the Australian Labour Party was heavily defeated. The Liberal-Country Party coalition succeeded in obtaining a majority in both houses of Parliament (91 out of 127 in the House of Representatives, and 35 out of 64 in the Senate). The main reason for Labour's defeat, in the opinion of both Australian and foreign political observers, was the fear entertained by voters—particularly middle-class voters, but some from the working class too—of "Labour experiments" which might destroy the stability of the existing system at a time when

¹ *U.S. News and World Report*, November 24, 1975, p. 60.

the country was experiencing severe economic difficulties. And this fear was played upon in every possible way by the mass media.

Despite the violent anti-Labour campaign waged by the right, more than 41 per cent of the electorate voted Labour. So the ALP in the main still retained its influence with those voters who were in sympathy with its economic and social reforms and its approach to foreign policy. The assertions in the bourgeois press that the election results demonstrated disenchantment of ordinary Australians with the ideals of socialism ("socialism" as understood by the Labour Party, that is) were not borne out by the facts.

The political crisis of November and December 1975 showed that the process of sharpening class struggle was underway in Australia too, in spite of the theoreticians of reformism who in the post-war period had been trying to represent it as "a continent of social and political stability".

On coming to power, the Fraser government set its sights on dismantling Labour's social reforms (though to begin with they promised to retain most of them). They maintained that the main task was to "restore" the economy to a "healthy state", which in practice meant making the working people bear the burden of the economic difficulties. But their measures for "restoration" did not produce the desired results. The government proved unable to solve any of the outstanding economic problems. In 1979 the rate of inflation stood at over 9 per cent. The rises in food prices and housing and transport costs were especially high. The high level of unemployment had not been brought down (in 1979 it was 405,000, or 6.2 per cent of the workforce).¹ Almost half of this army of unemployed were young people. Yet there was at the same time a shortage of skilled labour, and the government set in motion a programme for attracting this from Western Europe, the USA and South Africa. This naturally met with opposition from the Australian trade unions. The net result of inflation, increased taxation both direct and indirect, and higher contributions for medical and social services, was that living standards for working people were going down. After four years of Liberal-Country Party government, the purchasing power of a week's wages in Australia in 1979 was considerably less than it had been at the beginning of their term of office.

The government cut expenditure on social needs. The system of state medical insurance introduced by the Labour government was being wound up. A drive against the rights of trade unions be-

¹ *Main Economic Indicators*, Paris, December 1980, pp. 85-86.

gan. The government tried to use amendments to existing legislation to gain wider scope for repression and for limitation of the workers' right to engage in struggle. In the summer of 1979 some union leaders were arrested for addressing meetings of strikers, under a statute, applied for the first time, forbidding assembly of more than 3 persons without police permission.

This policy on the part of the government met with active opposition from the working people.

The working class rose in defence of union rights and the social gains it had won under the Labour government. In July 1976 defence of these gains was the slogan under which a general strike was called which paralysed industry and transport for 24 hours. Over 2 million workers, blue- and white-collar, took part in it.

The period after the 1975 election was characterised by an increasing number of strikes over demands of a political nature (preserving the social programmes begun under the Labour government, boycotting racist regimes in Southern Africa, halting the export of uranium, etc.). In September 1976 Douglas Anthony, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for National Resources and Overseas Trade violently attacked the unions taking part in "political strikes". He declared that such actions undermined faith in Australia among its trading partners and foreign investors.¹

In this period the trade union movement succeeded in stopping the U.S. nuclear-armed cruiser *Truxton* from entering Sydney harbour. Three hundred eminent figures in political and social life, including Robert Hawke, Chairman of the Labour Party and President of the Australian Council of Trade Unions, Chairman of the Socialist Party P. Clancy, former ministers of the Labour government, and members of both houses of Parliament issued a call for Australian withdrawal from ANZUS, the removal of American military bases from Australian territory, and implementation of an independent foreign policy.

A broad wave of protest followed the Fraser government's decision in 1977 to lift the ban which the Labour government had imposed upon the extraction and export of uranium. A Declare a Moratorium on Uranium committee, which united 67 different organisations, held demonstrations attended by many thousands of people and collected signatures to a petition calling for a 5-year moratorium on the export of uranium. In the state of Victoria alone 70,000 signatures were collected. This campaign assumed proportions as great as those of the anti-Vietnam War movement of the early 70s.

¹ *Weekly Newsletter*, Canberra, September 10, 1976, p. 4.

In November 1978 a march on Canberra was organised by the Australian Council of Trade Unions, the Australian Peace Council, women's, youth and pensioners' organisations and representatives of Aborigines. It started from all states simultaneously to end in a meeting outside the Parliament buildings. The speakers at this meeting pointed to the direct link between growing unemployment and the vast expenditure for military purposes.

In 1978, Australian progressive organisations held a conference in support of socialist Vietnam. In November 1979, Australian trade unionists took part in a conference of trade union solidarity among the countries of Asia and the Southern Pacific—an event of great significance in the development of the working-class movement in that region. P. Clancy, General Secretary of the Building Workers' Industrial Union of Australia and Chairman of the Socialist Party, in his speech to the conference welcomed the peace moves made by the Soviet government and suggested that the experience of the Helsinki Agreements should be used in South-East Asia and Oceania. He stressed that the fight for peace and social progress was the very stuff of trade unionism.

In the late 70s, the socio-economic struggles of the working class also became more acute. In 1978 the Australian Council of Trade Unions set on foot a country-wide campaign for higher wages and against incomplete index-linking of wages, which meant they did not keep pace with rising prices.¹ The trade unions insisted that they should play a part in planning the economy. In 1977-1978 the working people vigorously opposed the budgets produced by the Liberal-Country Party coalition and the increasing taxation. There were demonstrations by many thousands of people in Sydney, Adelaide and Brisbane. The budget which the government proposed for the financial year 1979-80 represented, in the estimation of the Executive of the Australian Council of Trade Unions, a refusal by the government to take responsibility for the country's social and economic situation. Speaking at the ACTU conference in September 1979, Bob Hawke stressed that the trade unions were not only critical of the government but set forth their own alternative policy intended to inject life into the economy and to reduce unemployment. This alternative was rejected by the conservative government, which was trying to put all the blame for the economic problems upon the unions.

¹ "Index-linking" had been introduced in 1975, and meant that the guidelines on wage rises issued every 6 months were linked to the rise in the cost-of-living index. In 1979-80, as the actual wage agreements concluded diverged more and more from the guideline figures, the whole system of index-linking began to fall apart.

In 1979 Australia was swept by a wave of strikes. Rail and urban transport functioned sporadically, movement by sea was halted, petrol deliveries broke down, the post and telegraph system practically ceased to operate. A particular feature of these strikes was the participation in them of state employees and clerical and administrative workers whose unions are usually among the least militant. The situation was made even more acute by the fact that the strikes affected public services and industries working for the export trade.

The strike wave of 1979 had several other distinctions. One was the increasing frequency of strikes. Another was that the key issues in the various conflicts were questions of wages, with political issues receding into the background. And the high level of unemployment (according to the data and forward estimates of the Ministry for Employment and Industrial Relations, the number of unemployed was due to rise by 50,000 annually right up to 1983) had no apparent effect on the intensity of these conflicts. The result of the determined fight by the working-class movement was that in January 1980 an arbitration commission decided on sanctioning wage rises of 4.5 per cent for 6 million workers, although the government was against any rise at all.

In 1979, certain shifts in the balance of forces on the political scene began to show themselves. The net effect was a strengthening of the left. At the 33rd Congress of the Labour Party, for instance, in July 1979, the left wing traditionally formed by the delegates from the state of Victoria was reinforced by the delegations of two more states.¹ The progressive forces within the Australian Council of Trade Unions grew stronger. This was reflected both in the programme for social and economic action in 1980-81 outlined at the ACTU congress (September 1979), and during the elections to the ACTU Executive. Socialist Party Chairman P. Clancy was re-elected to the ACTU Executive. The Socialist Party, which adheres to Marxism-Leninism, fights to build up a mighty popular movement against the monopolies and foreign capital domination, to rally the progressive and peace-loving forces of the country and to achieve international detente and social progress.

In *New Zealand*, in November 1972 the bourgeois National Party, which had held power for 12 years, lost to the Labour Party at the polls. The Labour government effected the complete withdrawal of New Zealand forces from Vietnam and stated its intentions to further international detente, to reduce New Zealand's dependence upon the USA, to shift the emphasis in its foreign policy from military blocs to co-operation in the interests of peace among countries of

¹ *Socialist*, Sydney, September 1, 1979.

the Asian and Pacific region. The Labour government also unfroze wages, which was especially important at that time of rising inflation.

In 1975, though, the National Party under Robert Muldoon returned to power. This government's policies, framed for the benefit of large-scale capital, made the situation of the workers considerably worse. In 1978-79 the rate of inflation was 15-17 per cent annually, and the number of unemployed rose to the highest figure for 40 years—over 50,000 (6.25 per cent of the workforce).¹ A total of 40,200 people emigrated within a year, either permanently or for a long period, over 13,000 of these being economically active.²

The Muldoon government's reactionary socio-economic policy evoked stormy protests from working people. A wave of strikes was their response to reintroduction of wage controls, to rising prices for electricity, petrol, etc., to rising rents and increased taxation. There were strikes in practically every industry. Many non-manual workers joined the strike movement, in particular the teachers. The culminating point was the first 24-hour general strike, the first of the kind in the history of New Zealand, called in September 1979 in connection with government attempts to outlaw free collective bargaining, to limit wage increases to 4.5 per cent and to discard the demands for establishment of a national minimum wage.

The years of the National Party's tenure of office were marked by the passage of anti-labour, anti-union legislation. The list of strike actions making the union liable to fines was expanded and the amounts of such fines were raised. The government went further, and introduced a bill giving the security services powers to intercept correspondence and tap telephones. Attempts were made by various means, including legislation, to launch a broad offensive against the left, to cut them off from the labour movement and to outlaw Communists.

This reactionary activity on the part of the government heightened the political struggle within the country. Opinion polls showed the popularity of the National Party at its lowest for 10 years. The influence of the Labour Party increased, while its political positions were shifting perceptibly leftwards. The new balance of political forces made itself clear at the parliamentary election of November 1978. Labour won 40.5 per cent of the vote and got their nose in front of the National Party, which had 39.5 per cent, but as a result of changes which had been made in constituency boundaries

¹ *Morning Star*, February 1, 1980.

² *New Society*, August 30, 1979, p. 459.

the Labour Party was still left in opposition (with 42 seats as against 49).

In the course of the struggle the working class repeatedly put forward demands of a political nature (specifically, that the government's pro-American line should be changed, that U.S. warships should be denied access to New Zealand harbours). And the late 70s saw a growth in the activity of the movement for the rights of the indigenous inhabitants of the country, the Maoris.

In the van of the working people's fight marches the Socialist Unity Party of New Zealand, whose positions are consistently Marxist-Leninist and in accord with proletarian internationalism. Communists have considerable influence in some trade unions. K. Douglas, General Secretary of the Federation of Labour and Secretary of the Socialist Unity Party, and William Andersen, National Chairman of the Socialist Unity Party and Chairman of the Auckland Trade Union Council, were among the leaders of the September 1979 general strike.

In October 1979 the 5th National Conference of the Socialist Unity Party took place. Its delegates discussed the pressing problems of the country's economic and political condition and the principal issues of the international situation. The policy documents approved by the conference define the SUP's targets as boosting its role in the country's political life, strengthening its position among the workers and expanding its membership.

The working-class movement in *Canada* was becoming an increasingly significant force. It played an important part in the fight to make the country fully independent of the USA, to oppose the American monopolies which had brought Canada's economy under their own control. This fight provided fertile soil for fostering co-operation among all the different groupings within the working-class movement and wide sections of society. In 1971 an Out Now Committee was formed in Ontario, demanding Canada's withdrawal from NATO and an independent foreign policy for Canada; the committee brought together representatives of a number of labour, youth and student organisations and various public bodies. Under pressure of public opinion, the Trudeau government in 1969 scaled down the Canadian forces within NATO command. At the 10th Convention of the Canadian Labour Congress, Canada's largest trade union federation, held in 1974, large numbers of delegates voted for a document calling on the government to reconsider its participation in NATO and NORAD (the joint Air Defence Command for North America).

The Canadian trade unions demanded democratic control over the energy resources and other wealth of the country, and insisted that the Federal government should oblige the big corporations to build

plants within Canada for the processing of Canadian raw materials, which would provide hundreds of thousands more jobs.

The day-to-day struggle brought workers with increasing frequency into conflict with either the Federal government or those of the various provinces. An especially fiercely-fought struggle took place in the spring of 1972 when the state employees of Quebec went on strike for higher pay and were supported by workers from a number of industries. When an anti-union bill was passed by parliament and three trade union leaders were arrested the workers responded with a one-day strike, seized the broadcasting station in Montreal, and took control of entire settlements in the mining areas. University students joined the strikers. The provincial government was forced to grant their employees' pay claim and to restore their right to strike.

A storm of protest from many trade unions was called forth by the Federal government's "anti-inflation programme" produced in early 1976. It provided for strict control over wages. At the end of February 1976 the leadership of the Canadian Labour Congress openly declared its opposition to this programme.

But the influence of the trade unions over social and economic policies still remains limited. This obliges the unions to pay a great deal of attention to their links with the New Democratic Party. The setting-up of the NDP in 1961, with a platform close to the tenets of Social Democracy, was at that time a great step forward in the development of the working-class movement. In the mid-60s a strong left-socialist trend emerged within the NDP, drawing its support, it is true, not so much from the workers as from the students and intellectuals. Pressure from the left wing upon the leadership of the NDP resulted in positive changes in the party's positions, especially on foreign policy. It was forthright in its condemnation of American aggression in Vietnam. It was also the only Social Democratic party to come out in favour of its country's withdrawal from NATO (decision of the Fifth NDP Convention 1969).

The NDP became the ruling party in three out of the 10 provinces of Canada (Manitoba, in 1969; Saskatchewan, in 1971; and British Columbia, in 1972). In Federal politics, however, the New Democrats remained behind the two leading bourgeois parties, the Liberals and the Conservatives. At the Federal elections of 1974 the NDP gained only 15.4 per cent of the vote.¹ The reforms set on foot in the provinces where the NDP was in power were of a rather limited kind. The most important among them were the establishment of state companies to compete with private enterprises,

¹ *Socialist Affairs*, No. 6, 1975, p. 106.

primarily in the extraction industries; the fixing of higher payments for mineral rights; and improvements in social insurance provisions. "We have no intention of expropriating", said the Premier of British Columbia. "Our aim is not to take over business, but to be partners with it."¹ Concerned about the feelings of U.S. investors, he was at pains to stress his pro-Americanism. The New Democratic provincial governments were in favour of freezing wages to combat inflation.

The New Democrats' successes in the provincial elections were only made possible by trade union support. In the province of Ontario, for example, in which one-third of all Canadians live, trade unions representing about 215,000 workers were collective members of the NDP (its total membership at that period was 500,000).² However, it was a sign of the times that in spite of the dominance of reformism within the labour movement the workers were not happy with the NDP's performance in government. Delegates from British Columbia attending the 11th Convention of the Canadian Labour Congress noted in their speeches that the policies of the New Democratic Government of their province were not in accord with the aims of the party. One of the delegates, defining the general principles which the NDP should be guided by, said: "We want the party to act on our behalf, on behalf of the Canadian working class."³ Many other delegates strongly criticised the NDP's vague and ambiguous attitude to wage controls.

While not refusing their support to the New Democratic Party at the polls, the trade unions opposed the idea that their part in the intensifying political struggle should be confined to electoral support. Thus in March 1978 representatives of the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour demanded, in a message to the New Democratic government of the province, that all oil and uranium deposits should be transferred to full public ownership. That same year, Canadian unions opposed the Federal government's repressive measures against the nationalist movement in Quebec. The unions also took part in the peace movement and in struggles against colonialism and racism.

In the second half of the 70s the workers stepped up their struggle to defend their living standards. The CLC leadership tried to reach agreement with the government and companies concerning national economic planning, which meant introduction of government control over investments and prices in exchange for workers'

¹ *U.S. News and World Report*, July 16, 1973, p. 55.

² *Canadian Tribune*, June 7, 1976.

³ *The Globe and Mail*, April 12, 1971. In the mid-70s the party had 350,000 members (*Socialist Affairs*, No. 6, 1975, p. 106).

agreement to introduce control over wages. Yet these attempts failed. Under pressure from below, the CLC had to lead a mass struggle against the wage controls which government introduced unilaterally.

After the parliamentary election of May 1979 the Canadian working class faced a new situation. For the first time in 11 years, the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada came to power, which meant a shift to the right in the political arena, stimulating a fresh drive against the working class by the bourgeoisie. The election also demonstrated the increasing polarisation of Canadian society. The Conservatives, led by Joe Clark, had not succeeded in winning an absolute parliamentary majority (136 out of a total of 282 in the House of Commons, with the Liberals and New Democrats together commanding 141). The New Democratic Party, with the support of the trade unions and of Communists in those constituencies where they had not their own candidates, actually increased their parliamentary representation from 17 to 26 seats. The Conservative government not only failed to solve the social and economic problems inherited from the Liberals, but made them worse: unemployment continued to go up, food prices rose sharply and taxation became heavier. In the social field the Conservative right-wing bent resulted in attempts to cut expenditure on the state medical service and unemployment benefits.¹ Prime Minister Clark's policies on energy were sharply criticised by the Communists, the New Democrats, the CLC, the Liberals and by many public bodies. The targets of attacks were the raised prices of oil and gas and the government's decision to return the state-owned corporation Petro-Canada to the oil monopolies. The Canadian Conservatives followed the lead of the United States on almost all foreign policy matters.

The unpopularity of Conservative policies, which operated against the general national interest and the attacks the Conservatives mounted against the social gains of the working people ended in a parliamentary no confidence vote, and new elections were called. In these elections, held in February 1980, the Tories were defeated. This change of government showed both the political instability within the country and the fact that the working class and the total forces of democracy had given a severe set-back to the attacks from the right. The New Democratic Party had considerable success, winning 32 parliamentary seats. The new government was formed by the Liberals.

Despite the capitulatory attitudes of the right wing in the NDP and the trade unions, the turn of the decade saw growing opposi-

¹ *Canadian Tribune*, September 24 and December 17, 1979.

tion within the working-class movement to the ruling circles' policy of participation in political and military blocs alongside the USA. In August 1979 the NDP criticised Conservative defence policy and called for a halt to plans for re-equipping the armed forces. When in May 1980 the national leadership of the NDP took up a sharply anti-Soviet stance and its leader Edward Broadbent announced his intention of revising the party's programme regarding its demand of withdrawal from NATO and NORAD, there was indignation not only among the rank-and-file members of the party, but within the NDP leadership in Ontario. At a meeting in Toronto the provincial party leadership passed a resolution stating that the national leadership and Broadbent himself were acting contrary to the letter and the spirit of the party's programme which called for Canadian withdrawal from NATO and NORAD. And the anti-Soviet propaganda started by the Carter administration and taken up by the right wing in the AFL-CIO gained no wide currency within the Canadian trade unions.

The resolution on ethnic relations in Canada passed at the CLC's 12th Convention in April 1978 was a major achievement for democratic attitudes within the trade unions. This resolution for the first time recognised the right of the population of French-speaking Quebec to decide their own political and constitutional future. The resolution and an accompanying appeal spoke of the need for a new Canadian constitution recognising the English speakers and the French speakers as equal partners in a federal state. This resolution was endorsed by the 23rd Convention of the Ontario Federation of Labour (November 27-30, 1979), the largest labour federation in the country (800,000 members).¹ Given the problem of unity with a labour movement split between two federations, the CLC and the CNTU, this declaration coming from the English-speaking working class was a major step forward.

The anti-communism of right-opportunist labour leaders, their reformist ideology, the gap between word and deed in their activity, their politicking and tendency towards class collaboration constitute a serious obstacle to the further development of the working-class movement in Canada. Nonetheless, a leftward shift is definitely observable within the working-class movement; it now intervenes more firmly on major policy matters.

The development of consistent class attitudes in the movement is much assisted by the work of the Communist Party of Canada. The Communists fight the right-reformist line of Canadian Social Democracy, working to strengthen unity in action against the monopolies, demanding policies for full employment from the Federal

¹ *Canadian Tribune*, December 17, 1979.

government, and fighting the cuts in the health service and in unemployment benefits. At its 24th Convention (January 5-7, 1980) the CPC declared itself firmly against the Canadian Tories' policies leading to increased taxation and rising food prices. With the true interests of the nation at heart, the CPC proposed nationalisation of energy and other resources, and an independent economic policy; it also called for a new Constitution for Canada. The 24th Convention called on the Federal government to "recognise the French- and the English-speaking nations as two equal partners in the federal state". The Convention also called for ratification of the SALT-2 Treaty, an end to the arms race, and a 50 per cent reduction in Canada's military expenditure. Another resolution approved by the convention called on the trade unions to fight for legislation to stop the practices by which strikes could be outlawed and pickets dispersed by police.¹

**BASIC TRENDS AND CONFLICTS IN THE DEVELOPMENT
OF THE WORKING-CLASS MOVEMENT
IN THE SMALLER COUNTRIES OF WESTERN EUROPE,
AND IN AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND AND CANADA**

The features to be observed in the working-class movement in the late 60s and early 70s, allow of the conclusion that not only in the main capitalist countries but in a number of smaller ones also it was developing both in scope and in depth. Under the simultaneous pressure of the crisis in international relations typical of the cold war period, of the monetary and energy crises, of inflation and a number of social problems which became urgent in this period, and, lastly, of the acute economic crisis of the mid-70s, there has been an increasing similarity in the situation in all these countries, though considerable distinctions persisted owing to the variety in history, traditions, the level of economic and political development, in political system and working-class consciousness. In all the capitalist countries the actual course of events was increasingly determined by whether or not the working-class movement was ready and able to grasp the new phenomena in class relationships and class struggle, and to put forward its own solutions to pressing social problems. That which only yesterday seemed impossible, a typical for a given country, was unexpectedly moved on to the immediate agenda, that which seemed long-ago determined and lasting was revealed as unstable, temporary and transient.

¹ *Canadian Tribune*, January 14, 1980.

Signs of political instability, loss of credibility by ruling circles, and malfunctions in the political machinery of capitalism were seen during this period in countries with widely differing conditions of political life—in Canada, where the bourgeois parties used to be in continuous tenure of power, in Belgium where coalition governments of varying composition followed one after another, and in Scandinavian countries, long held to be the unquestioned preserves of social reformism.

In most of the countries under consideration (with a few exceptions, such as Austria and Switzerland) the strike movement increasingly assumed mass proportions, often overlapping the bounds of established tradition, and the degree of working class organisation grew both in industrial relations and on the political plane. A new, young generation of workers entered the struggle, in some cases bringing with them higher demands and greater militancy, and often displaying an active opposition to bourgeois values and a desire for unity overcoming ideological barriers.

The in-depth development of the working-class movement was shown in the continuing growth of class consciousness among the proletariat, in the way many of its new contingents were overcoming old prejudices (for instance, that "strikes are not necessary", that it is a "patriotic duty" to support imperialist policies, that it is impermissible to co-operate with Communists, and so on). In the trade unions of various countries (Belgium, Denmark, Canada and others) militancy increased. Labour parties gained electoral successes. Simultaneously, some Social Democratic parties long holding to classic reformist positions (in Scandinavia, for example) were faced with a crisis as to further aims which forced them to go over from their policy of integrating in the capitalist system to one directed against the domination of the monopolies.

Another expression of the in-depth development of the working-class movement in the 70s was the frequent appearance in the forefront of mass struggle of demands for democratic social and economic reforms. Just as this happened in Italy, France and Great Britain, the same was evident in Canada, Belgium, Denmark, Sweden and Finland. This was important in bridging the gap, existing in the early 60s, between immediate, purely economic demands advanced by the overwhelming mass of workers, and general political demands (safeguarding peace, overthrowing dictatorships, achieving full independence, repelling ultra-right reactionaries), demands not connected with current social and economic issues and drawing into active struggle either only the vanguard of the workers or the main body of working people for a brief period. In the late 60s and early 70s the loud demand in many countries

for reform of social security, education, health service, housing and taxation, for democratic control over investment, for labour organisations to have wider power at enterprises, etc., provided what had been the missing link in making the platform of the working-class movement a much more real alternative to the monopolies' policies. These demands expressed the immediate needs not only of the working class proper, but of all working people, their new requirements developing in the course of the scientific and technological revolution and the class struggle. These demands, at the same time, broke through into the political sphere and gave real meaning to calls for structural change, shift to the left and steering a democratic, anti-monopoly course. This widening of the issues raised by the movement underlined the fact that the working class fights not for its own interests alone, and created new opportunities for working towards anti-monopoly coalition.

The economic crisis of the mid-70s again brought to the fore the traditional demands for higher wages, for measures against unemployment, and in defence of the purchasing power of the people. Often this toned down the interest in the new demands mentioned above. But in a number of cases the fight to defend and to raise living standards became a part of a wider struggle for a new line in social and economic policy, as happened in Italy, Belgium and Canada. The working class put forward its own solutions to social problems, its own way out of economic difficulties.

In those cases fairly frequent in the 70s, where the economic struggle of the working class was waged with determination and militant spirit, without being watered down by the collaborationist ideas of reformist leaderships, nor yet confined within the narrow limits of the interests of particular groups or sections, it increasingly emerged on to the national stage and became interwoven with the party-political battle. Economic struggle as such, of course, could never bring about a radical transformation of society. But in many cases extension of the range of matters raised in workers' demands, including those bearing upon the country's general social and economic line of movement, the growing awareness among workers in some countries of the close though complex connections between their own immediate needs and the problems of the nation as a whole, indicated a growth of class and political consciousness without which there can be no transformation of society.

The working class intervened in a more active manner in the sphere of industrial management and, moreover, state administration. It insistently raised, especially when the movement was on an upswing, issues of democratisation, of grass-roots control over decision-making, of curbing monopoly domination and increasing the work-

ing people's influence on state and social institutions. The idea that under the present conditions even the everyday economic interests of working people could not be successfully defended unless there is a democratisation of society, was making headway among the masses. Anti-capitalist feelings became more widespread than before, and the idea of socialism came to carry more authority.

Of course, by far not every instance of the working class advancing a wide range of social and economic demands was accompanied by elaboration of a clear-cut political programme, or of a clear strategy for attaining far-reaching democratic changes for undermining and finally removing the domination of the monopolies. The influence of reformism within the working-class movement, especially in Scandinavian countries, Austria, Switzerland and Holland, frequently held back development of the struggle and hampered initiatives from below.

In some countries the effect of prolonged economic disorder and mass unemployment with no alternative offered to the state-monopoly order of things, resulted in apathy, pessimism about the future. In these cases workers tended retreat within the confines of immediate, often narrowly parochial interests.

In the 70s, working-class pressure became even more important owing to the trend, increasing among large-scale capital, towards tougher policies, a shift to the right in political life, a drive against the working class and restrictions on trade union and other democratic rights. This harsher confrontation with the ruling class made it especially vital to find allies, to weld together a coalition against the monopolies.

The conditions prevailing in this period increased the similarity of social and political situations in different countries and thus underlined the international nature of the working-class movement. But they did not and could not remove all differences of circumstance, all the vital special features proper to each nation. The level of the working-class movement is not the same in every country and its development proceeds unevenly.

The late 60s and early 70s were marked by mass involvement of contingents of students, intellectuals and non-manual workers in the democratic and anti-capitalist struggle. The question of the leadership by the working class within the anti-monopoly alliance assumed more urgent importance than ever before. This called for a careful consideration by the proletariat of the needs of the middle strata of society, for co-ordinated programmes, and for a principled struggle against non-proletarian ideas within the movement. Here a particularly important duty devolved upon the Communists and other left-wing forces in the working-class movement. Anti-communism was growing less effective, the experience of the revolutionary pro-

letarian vanguard was being expanded and its strategy and tactics further developed; all this was of help to the Communist parties, whose influence had on the whole increased, in their task of combatting the reformist and ultra-left elements within the working-class movement, and making a real and constructive contribution to rallying democratic forces and forming an anti-monopoly alliance. The maturity of the movement as a whole and the level of the leadership it is able to give are factors of enormous importance in using the opportunities offered by the new stage in the struggle.

Part Four

POLITICAL AND IDEOLOGICAL ISSUES OF THE WORKING-CLASS MOVEMENT

Chapter 13

IDEOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL EVOLUTION OF SOCIAL DEMOCRACY DURING THE NEW STAGE OF THE GENERAL CRISIS OF CAPITALISM

The exacerbation of the capitalist world's problems, which set in from the late 50s onwards both domestically and on an international scale, and the marked increase in the influence exerted by the socialist community countries upon the course of world events in many ways changed the conditions for Social Democratic and Socialist parties, forcing them to make certain alterations in the principles and patterns of political behaviour and to renovate their armoury of political ideas. At a time when these parties continued to give the lead to major contingents of the working class and to exert a vital influence upon the general climate prevailing within the working-class and democratic movement, the nature and direction of this evolution acquired priority importance. It to a large extent determined the course and outcome of the struggle over one of the most fundamental, cardinal problems of the labour movement in developed capitalist countries, the problem of political unity.

In the immediate post-war period the Social Democratic parties used their mass support and influence for the purpose of preserving and stabilising the power of large-scale capital. The socio-economic reforms carried out by them or under their influence, went some way towards satisfying only some of the most pressing requirements of working people, particularly in the area of social services. The main import of the Social Democratic reforms was modernisation and extension of all the forms of state intervention in the economy and in social relations, it was a forcing-house for state-monopoly capitalism.

The fact that they performed such an office strengthened the positions of Social Democracy as a political force trusted by the ruling classes, and helped these parties to take a place in the pattern of power on a par, in a number of cases, with bourgeois parties. This naturally had its effect upon the whole subsequent evolution of Social Democracy, making it less susceptible to influence from those

positive changes which occurred in the working-class and democratic movement and in the international situation due to the onset of a new stage in the general crisis of capitalism and which caused that crisis to further deepen during the 60s and, especially, in the 70s.

THE "REVISIONISM" OF THE EARLY 50s AND LATE 60s, AND THE SHARPENING PARTY INFIGHTING

The changes within the working-class and democratic movement, apparent from the mid-50s on and the accompanying changes in the international situation and balance of forces evoked varying reactions within Social Democracy. While its left wing realised, with this or that degree of clarity, the need to undertake a serious review of its political course, the right wing, still dominant in leadership, did all it could to hinder any change and to hold fast to the line formulated in the days of the Cold War.

So far as foreign policy was concerned, this meant refusal to make any serious concessions to the forces of peace, and loud proclamations of loyalty to "Atlantic solidarity", NATO, and continuation of the arms race. The West German Social Democratic Party had at one point been ready to meet popular demands for settlement of the German issue half-way and in 1958 even produced its own Plan for Germany, which ruled out remilitarisation of the FRG and nuclear weapons for it and contained a number of positive points which would have aided settlement of the programme. It is significant that that notwithstanding, already in 1960 the Party expressed its practically unconditional support for Adenauer's foreign policy. Its congress in Hanover that year passed a resolution put forward by the leadership which demanded that the Bundeswehr be supplied with "effective arms and equipment". The leadership of the British Labour Party did much the same thing. Having in 1956 expressed support for "peaceful coexistence" and for a plan to create a nuclear-free zone in Europe (the "Rapacki Plan"), the Party's leader Hugh Gaitskell proceeded, in the years following, to conduct a savage campaign against the Party's left wing which was trying to get some real action on nuclear disarmament and removal of the threat of nuclear war. Although the leadership was obliged to make some concessions (it agreed, for instance, that the Party's main policy statement on foreign affairs should include such points as a commitment by Britain to halt nuclear tests unilaterally, and a call for summit talks on disarmament), the main stress was still laid on keeping unchanged the main principles of British foreign and military policy as enunciated at the height of the cold war.

Significantly, not one of the Social Democratic parties of the

West gave any support to the peace initiatives undertaken in those years by the Soviet Union and other socialist countries and designed to halt the arms race, reduce international tension and remove the danger of war. The general attitude of Social Democracy is shown in the foreign policy sections of the documents passed at this period by the Socialist International. In the principal document of those years, the Declaration adopted in 1962 and entitled *World Today—the Socialist Perspective*, the recurring theme is unconcealed anti-communism, accusations of “aggressiveness” supposedly manifested by the Soviet Union, and arguments for building up NATO as “a bulwark of peace” and providing it with the latest nuclear weapons.¹

But while some waverings can be distinguished in the line of the right-wing Social Democratic leadership on matters of foreign and military policy, this certainly cannot be said of their attitude on social and economic matters, on policy at home. Practically everywhere the right were on the offensive, even forcing the pace, trying to achieve as quickly as may be the final revision of the Marxist heritage. The late 50s are the high point of right-wing reformist activity among the Social Democrats, the zenith of their revisionism. Never has such a multitude of new, or would-be-new, definitions and formulations been brought to birth within such a short space of time—and not only borne, but set down in the record, in the fixed phrases of policy documents. Alongside the already current phrases such as “democratic socialism” and “the welfare state” we now find “functional socialism”, “the state of law”, “the mixed economy”, etc.

Undoubtely the main reason for this luxuriant growth and harvest of revisionist ideas in the Social Democratic parties at this period was that in the preceding one, the right wing had not quite completed the task of “purging” themselves of scientific socialism. Furthermore, the right were worried lest the rising wave of the mass movement might swamp and sweep away their plans. And a quite significant factor was the inner readiness for the last move by right-wing Social Democracy: they already had sufficient weaponry on hand, in the way of political theory, for making the decisive charge.

The *New Fabian Essays* brought out in 1952 by a group of young Labour theoreticians in Britain, Anthony Crosland's *The Future of Socialism* (1956—again in Britain), Benedikt Kautsky's *Road to a New Programme for the Austrian Socialist Party* (Vienna, 1957), Leo Kofler's *Marxist or Ethical Socialism?* (FRG, 1955), *Socialism in Our Time* by Ernst Wigforss (Sweden, 1952), Antonio Giolitti's

¹ *Socialist International Information*, London, June 16, 1962.

Reforms or Revolution (Italy, 1957)¹—these are only a few of the best-known revisionist works of the 50s, they contained all the formulations and recipes ready-made, all that still needed to be done was to get them enshrined in officially approved declarations and programmes.

That operation was carried through in record time. In 1957 the British Labour Party approved a policy statement called *Industry and Society*,² in which the key idea was recognition of the "right and proper" place of the big capitalist corporations in contemporary society, the idea of "the mixed economy". In 1958, a Congress of the Austrian Socialist Party meeting in Vienna, approved an even more sonorous and all-embracing programme which declared that socialism was already at the door and which openly parted company with the basic tenets of Marxism.³ A year later the Social Democratic Party of Germany approved the Godesberg Programme which has become a prime example of Social Democracy's retreat from socialism.⁴ The same year, the British Labour Party leader Hugh Gaitskell, not content with his partial success in 1957, attempted to have mention of public ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange removed from the party's programme documents. He failed, but the programme approved a year later, *Signposts for the Sixties*,⁵ confirmed all the concepts of "the mixed economy" which had previously been formulated in the 1957 programme.

In 1959 yet another party of the Socialist International, the Belgian Socialist Party, carried through a far-reaching revision of its programme tenets.⁶ In 1960 the Social Democratic Labour Party of Sweden and the Labour Party of the Netherlands, and in 1961 the French Socialists did the same.⁷

Thus, in the course of about 5 years all the main Social Democratic parties of the developed capitalist countries (with the exception of the Socialist parties of Italy and Japan) made a radical revision

¹ *New Fabian Essays*, London, 1952; C. A. R. Crosland, *The Future of Socialism*, London, 1956; B. Kautsky, *Der Weg zum neuen Programm der SPÖ*, Vienna, 1957; L. Kofler, *Marxistischer oder ethischer Sozialismus?*, Hanover, 1955; W. E. Wigforss, *Socialism i vår tid*, Stockholm, 1952; A. Giolitti, *Riforme e rivoluzione*, Turin, 1957.

² *Industry and Society*, London, 1957.

³ *Ausserordentlicher Parteitag der SPÖ. 1958*, Vienna, 1958.

⁴ *Protokoll der Verhandlungen des Ausserordentlichen Parteitages der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands vom 13.-15. November 1959 in Bad Godesberg*, Bonn/Bad Godesberg, 1972 (further: *Parteitag der SPD in Bad Godesberg*).

⁵ *Signposts for the Sixties*, London, 1961.

⁶ *Matériaux du Congrès extraordinaire du PSB*, Brussels, 1959.

⁷ *De politiska partiernas program*, Stockholm, 1970; *Déclaration de principes et programme fondamentale*, Arras, 1962.

of their stated aims and approved propositions which almost completely re-assessed all they had previously proclaimed. The Social Democratic Party of Finland had done the job even before. The anti-communism of its right-wing leaders of that day was so great that as early as 1952 they succeeded in getting the party to approve a new, "modern" programme in which the be-all and end-all was the attainment of partial reforms and class collaboration between labour and capital. It is probably because this was a pioneering effort of that kind that this particular programme did to some extent retain a pseudo-Marxist turn of phrase.¹

The essential point about the evolution of Social Democratic theory and ideology which found expression in the programme documents mentioned above, was that it marked a radical shift from socialist ideas to bourgeois-liberal concepts in the outlook of right-wing Social Democrats. Bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideas are a fixed characteristic of all varieties of social-reformism. But until the early 1950s, this bourgeois-liberal component occupied a relatively small place in the ideology and theory of Social Democracy, and could not, at any rate formally, be regarded as a basic ideological tenet. Though in practice it was this side of the reformists' outlook which determined the political behaviour of right-wing Socialist leaders and the governments they led.

The influence of socialist ideas was shown principally in the very fact that a number of socio-economic reforms were indeed carried out, in the social climate created around these reforms, and lastly in the promises which were made for the future. So long as right-wing Social Democracy still held in reserve some as yet unrealised bourgeois-liberal, neo-capitalist reforms, it did not have to worry too much about the presence of socialist aims and obligations in its policy documents. But it was another matter when the list of reforms which the Social Democrats could actually carry through had come to an end, or nearly to an end (so far at least as that stage of capitalism was concerned) and Social Democracy was coming closer and closer to the date at which its socialist "promissory notes" would fall due and have to be paid up. And herein lies one more quite important reason for the haste with which the right-wing leaders were attempting to free themselves from obligations which were becoming more and more troublesome.

It is also the main reason why right-wing Social Democracy tried, at this particular stage, to equate the "welfare state" with the "practical" and "democratic" socialism which it had bound itself to bring about. Both in the books written by its theoreticians, and in official party documents, the contemporary, actually capitalist society

¹ *SPD Puhuu, Periaatechjelma*, Helsinki, 1963.

of the 50s is endowed with characteristics which supposedly make it into something that can no longer be called capitalist. Sometimes it is referred to as "post-capitalist",¹ sometimes the neutral word "contemporary" is used, though the term most frequently appearing is our old acquaintance the "welfare state". Stressing in every possible way the "transitional" character of a society in which capitalism is no longer dominant, the Social Democratic ideologists never wearied of repeating that "the capitalist economy will imperceptibly become a new economy", which "while not being collectivist, will none the less be collective".² In the programme documents of the Austrian Socialist Party it is directly asserted that in "the democratic countries" one can already see the beginning of "the era of socialism being brought about".³ In the interpretations voiced by the above-mentioned authors and programmes "democratic socialism" is thus transformed into an already visible and tangible pattern—which bears a remarkably close resemblance to existing capitalism, differing from it only in detail.

This equation of the future ideal with slightly "improved" contemporary capitalist society is a constant theme in the programmes and policy statements mentioned above. Social Democrats thus had only to get rid of a few isolated, minor faults in "the welfare state", and make sure that its foundations remained firm.

From the point of view of theory, of ideas, this meant in essence legitimising the bourgeois-liberal concepts which up till then had been kept carefully concealed. Perhaps the most characteristic gambit used here was the sort of second coming of Keynes which the right-wing Social Democrats staged at this point. Keynes' ideas, which up to then had been mentioned for the most part only in footnotes, in passing, now began to be proclaimed from the house-tops, and many pages of theoretical works were devoted to expounding them. One of the new wave of British Labour ideologists, John Strachey, asserted in his *Contemporary Capitalism* that Keynes' theory contained all, or almost all, that was needed to make it an instrument whereby capitalism could be not only modernised, but transformed into socialism. According to Strachey, Keynes had "evolved one critically important aspect of the economic theory of last stage capitalisms, their control, modification and, if desired, supersession".⁴

Keynes was not the only authority appealed to, of course. In SFIO's Fundamental Programme approved by the French Socialists

¹ *New Fabian Essays*, pp. 38-42.

² *Socialisme*, Brussels, 1963, No. 58, p. 435.

³ *Die österreichische Sozialdemokratie im Spiegel ihrer Programme*, Vienna, 1964, p. 73.

⁴ J. Strachey, *Contemporary Capitalism*, London, 1956, p. 213.

at their 53rd Congress in 1961, it was stated that socialism "is compatible with any convictions, so long as these do not infringe the secular nature of the state and its democratic institutions".¹ The Godesberg Programme of the West German SPD contains a no less characteristic thesis. "The roots of democratic socialism," it says, "go back to Christian ethics, humanism and classical philosophy".² Marxism, as one may see, has been crowded out altogether.

It is a typical feature of these new Social Democratic programmes that they in a way rehabilitate large-scale capitalist ownership in its most modern forms. As the Godesberg programme puts it, "private ownership of the means of production has a right to be defended and supported, so long as it does not hinder the creation of a just social order".³ At the same time it stressed that "free enterprise is an important element in Social Democratic economic policy".⁴ In the 1957 British Labour Party document already referred to there is the significant statement: "The Labour Party recognises that, under increasingly professional managements, large firms are as a whole serving the nation well."⁵ Similar statements, with variations, are to be found in the documents of other parties in this period. While not denying the need for some extension of state ownership of the means of production, the programmes of the late 50s play down in every way the importance of nationalising whole industries, replacing that idea by references to "creeping nationalisation" and "the mixed economy",⁶ and so make the rule of large-scale private ownership in practice never-ending.

A special place in the books and programmes of right-wing Social Democracy at this period belongs to the concept of the neutral "democratic state" standing above society. According to the ideologists of Social Democracy it is not the working class, or the mass of working people, but the existing state—under the guidance of Social Democratic governments—(and without, one may add, any at all significant alterations to the apparatus of state) which is to become the main motive force for social progress, the bearer of social justice and an instrument of attaining equality and socialism. To attribute such a positive role to the state means that any increase in political activity of the working class, any keener class struggle, is naturally not only unnecessary but actually harmful. And why should any struggle be needed, if, according to one of the most prominent new

¹ *Déclaration de principes et programme fondamentale*, p. 2.

² *Parteitag der SPD in Bad Godesberg*, p. 13.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

⁵ *Industry and Society*, London, 1957, pp. 48-49.

⁶ For the fullest exposition of these matters see: Hugh Gaitskell, *Socialism and Nationalisation*, London, 1956.

theoreticians of British Labour, "Today the capitalist business class has lost this commanding position"?¹ Much the same assertion is made in the 1960 programme of the Swedish Social Democratic Labour Party, which says that in the welfare state created since the war "the sole power wielded by the private owners of capital has been broken".²

It is not surprising to find that one of the most important functions of the "social" or "legal" state, in the concepts of right-wing Social Democrats, is to soften class contradictions and achieve national unity.³ As Tage Erlander, Swedish Social Democratic leader and Prime Minister in 1946-69 expressed it: "Sweden is a country where the state is an instrument of co-operation between separate individuals."⁴ Arguments of this sort were also used by right-wing reformist leaders and theoreticians to combat what they saw as the "one-sided" orientation of the Social Democratic parties towards the working class, to turn them into "national" parties representing the interests of "the whole people".

However, the total and all-embracing re-orientation of theory and ideas made by the majority of Social Democratic parties in the late 50s did not bring about complete eradication of traditional socialist ideas. This is not merely a matter of continued use of the word "socialism". Those ideas remained in a whole series of theses and demands included in policy statements. Figuring in many of these are undertakings, clearly carried over from previous programmes, concerning the introduction of "industrial" or "economic" democracy. They speak of the need to attain social equality and social justice, of all-round development of the individual, the necessity to find radical solutions to the housing problem and to problems of education, health care and social security, and to eradicate deprivation, poverty and ignorance. Nor did the Social Democrats foreswear further extension of public ownership. True, in the general context of the new statements all these points inevitably lost their original meaning, and in practice there was nothing going further than ordinary measures of reform, mostly of a very limited nature. Still, the very presence of such undertakings and the importance attributed to them by the broad masses of Social Democracy's supporters (with whom in mind, largely, they were left in the programmes) provide evidence that it was not as yet a question of Social Democracy changing direction completely onto the lines of neo-capitalist reformism.

Retention by the Social Democratic movement and its parties of the traditional socialist, working-class component was seen, how-

¹ C. A. R. Crosland, *op cit.*, pp. 26, 29.

² *De politiska partiernas program*, Stockholm, 1968, p. 164.

³ *Parteitag der SPD in Bad Godesberg*, pp. 15-16.

⁴ *Stockholms-Tidningen*, April 5, 1961.

ever, not only in its various statements and even not so much in them as in the activity of the left-wing and socialist forces within it, an activity which increased noticeably during this period. It was the left wing of Social Democracy, for all its inconsistency, which at this critical time operated as the principal force preserving the old values and preventing the parties from bourgeois mutation. Even in those cases where the left was insufficiently active and did not put up any serious challenge to the "new wave", their very existence and the perceived links between them and the masses of the party rank and file was a major obstacle to realisation of the right-wing leaders' plans.

In the socio-economic field, left-wing Socialists and Social Democrats defended the principles of public ownership of the means of production, and fought for the creation of effective social services and social insurance, for the extension of the democratic rights of workers and their organisations. In the international field they called for an end to the Cold War and the arms race, for the establishment of constructive political, economic and cultural relations with the Soviet Union and the other socialist states, for final dismantling of the colonial system of imperialism and an end to neo-colonial exploitation of developing countries.

The struggle which went on within a number of Social Democratic parties in the late 50s and early 60s was clearly a matter of greater import than any purely internal strife; in essence it was a struggle to preserve the socialist nature of a considerable portion of the working-class movement, to prevent the split within the movement from worsening and becoming permanent.

The fight put up by the left forces within Social Democracy in this period kept alive, and in some cases extended, the possibilities of ensuring long-term, effective unity in action within the working-class movement. Although the left themselves were in most cases not free from anti-communist prejudice, the actual demands they were making inevitably predisposed them to look favourably upon ideas of unity.

The most effective resistance to the anti-socialist encroachments by the right wing was made in those places where the left could count on massive support from below, where the mass of party members and affiliated trade unions were drawn into the struggle. The general social and political climate in this or that country also played no small part. It is significant that the Italian Socialist Party leaders after breaking in 1956 the agreement on co-operation with the Communists, did not, right up to 1962, even raise the question of radically reviewing their stated policies. And the main reason for this lay in a great upsurge of activity by the working-class and democratic movement, which occurred just when other parties

were at the height of their revisionism. The Italian Socialist Party's move to the right, starting in 1962, was rather different in character, being linked more with the next stage in the theoretical development of Social Democracy, which will be dealt with later.

Equally revealing is the effect which the mounting wave of strike actions and mass political activity had, at the turn of the 50s, upon the position and behaviour of right-wing Socialist leaders in Japan. Realising that it was hopeless to try and renovate their party in line with neocapitalist reformism, they were in 1960 obliged to leave it altogether, and organise their own Democratic Socialist Party. Its name speaks volumes, regarding the ideas underlying the policies it put forward. Despite all the efforts by the new party's leaders and the class-collaborationist trade unions which supported it, it did not succeed in breaking down the influence of the Socialist Party, either with the mass of the party's members, or with the electorate. The Democratic Socialist Party never won more than 6 per cent of the vote at election time, even in its best years, while the Socialist Party usually gained 25-30 per cent.

Growing political activity by the working class had a noticeable effect upon the nature of the internal processes in the British Labour Party also. The late 50s and early 60s saw a great rise in the movement for unilateral nuclear disarmament, with trade unions taking an active part, and this favoured a sharp increase in the activity of the Labour Party's left wing and a sharp bout of inner-party struggle. In this period the influence exerted by the Victory for Socialism group, set up within the Labour Party after the war, shows a noticeable increase. The trade unions became active participants in the struggle, and the greater the pressure by the mass movement, the more definitely did the unions tend to listen to the left and come out against the line of the right wing. The great miscalculation of Hugh Gaitskell when at a Labour conference in 1959 he spoke in favour of removing the clause concerning public ownership of the means of production from the Party's constitution, was that he failed to take into account the new, militant mood in the trade unions and the party branches. The rising wave of dissatisfaction with the right-wing leadership's policies led to the 1960 Conference in Scarborough rejecting the leadership's official resolution on foreign policy and calling on any future Labour government to put unilateral nuclear disarmament into operation and to remove American nuclear bases from British soil. At the same time the Conference re-affirmed the party's fidelity to its original socialist aims and insisted that the relevant clause in its constitution be retained.

This success at Scarborough was a great victory for the left in the Labour Party. It demonstrated for all to see that socialist con-

viction within the British working class had not worn away during the post-war "prosperity", more—that it had gained new strength as the general crisis of capitalism grew more acute. Although in subsequent years the leadership of the party did, as already noted, succeed in getting the idea of "the mixed economy" accepted, the continuing presence in the party's constitution of clauses affirming its socialist aims meant that the struggle was not over, it went on.

Increasing activity by the working class and the trade unions had a very tangible impact upon the new policy formulations of the Belgian Socialist Party also. Although the programme which this party approved in 1959 envisaged no radical changes in property relations and put the main emphasis on "flexible democratic planning", the actual import of some of the specific goals and proposals contained in it was far from fitting in the latest revisionist concepts. Some of the measures known as "structural reforms", and included in the programme under direct pressure from the unions, would, if consistently applied, have meant a considerable limitation of the power of the monopolies. Among these measures were: nationalisation of the coal and power industries, equal rights for trade unions and management in the running of private enterprises, and equal representation for workers and management in the bodies running nationalised industries and plants. Hardly surprisingly, the attitude taken to these proposals became the right-or-left denominator in the working-class movement.

The mounting mass movement in France in the late 50s and early 60s also had its effect upon the ideological evolution of the Socialist Party. Although the main points of the inner-party struggle at this time were the issue of Algeria, the personal power regime and the country's political development generally, the greatly heightened level of activity by the party's left wing created serious difficulties for the right's plans in the ideological field. Despite the party's acceptance of the revisionist 1961 programme already mentioned, both the rank-and-file members of the party and a good part of its activists and leadership continued to occupy their traditional socialist positions. The efforts made by the left wing to bring the whole party back to these positions built up year by year. The obstacles the right-wing leaders of the party met with along the road to revision of its socialist aims would undoubtedly have been even more serious had it not been for the secession, on the eve of the sharpest conflict within the party, of a group of left-wingers who left and formed the Autonomous Socialist Party in 1958; in 1960 this joined with some other groups to form the Unified Socialist Party. This new body, despite all its vigorous efforts, proved unable to muster any mass support to speak of, and soon became itself the arena of fierce factional struggle.

The direct dependence of the failure or success of revisionist activities by right-wing Socialists on the level of the mass movement is equally well demonstrated by the case of those countries where the mass activity was relatively low in the period under consideration. This explains why it was in the FRG, Austria, Sweden, Holland, Norway and some other countries, that the activities of the right were most successful. But even in these countries the sharp turn to the right produced a perceptible aggravation of inner conflicts within Social Democracy. Thus although opposition from the left within the SPD was rather feeble while the Godesberg Programme was being prepared, debated and approved, quite soon after its approval dissatisfaction with this new line became much more marked, particularly among the youth sections and trade union side of the party. One particular manifestation of this was the passage of a resolution at the congress of the largest union, the metalworkers, which called for the transfer to public ownership of the key industries and the banks. Already at that point, growing trade union opposition to the frankly collaborationist line of the SPD's right-wing leaders had a distinct effect on the state of affairs both within the party and in the working-class movement as a whole.

Serious friction between a collaborationist right-wing leadership and the trade union wing occurred in the late 40s in Finland's Social Democratic Party. It became so acute that the group most closely associated with the unions, led by Emil Skog, actually left the party.¹

Even within the Social Democratic Labour Party of Sweden, where the right wing felt most secure, considerable left-wing opposition made itself felt while the new programme was being worked out and approved. After it was approved at a congress in 1960 the opposition continued to fight on and was instrumental in bringing more moderately-minded persons into the leadership.

So, even though the right-wing leaders of Social Democratic parties in the late 50s and early 60s succeeded in most cases in carrying through a far-reaching revision of their parties' traditional socialist aims, they did not succeed in their main task—that of expunging socialist ideals from the consciousness of the broad mass of Social Democrats. A comparative look at the situation as it developed in this period in different countries and parties shows that the right wing owed its successes primarily to inadequate levels of activity within the working-class movement, not to any deep change in the consciousness of the working masses it had hoped for.

¹ See Hannes Tiainen, *Kun puolue räjähti*, Helsinki, 1968, pp. 143-45.

Certainly the offensive mounted by the right-wingers in the ideological field was a hindrance, and a considerable one, to the working-class movement attaining both national and international goals, and to its political unity. At the same time, however, the political and ideological disagreements which grew throughout this period and the noticeable invigoration of the socialist left, came to present a serious threat to the "new line" itself and to those who had directly inspired it and put it into operation. All this inevitably led to even greater exacerbation of the inner conflicts within Social Democracy, and caused the right wing to seek for new ways and means of bolstering up its positions.

THE "TECHNOCRATIC" DEVIATION BY REFORMIST LEADERS AND ITS SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES

In spite of the considerable success achieved in the matter of excising socialist aims from the programmes of Social Democratic parties, the leaders and ideologists of those parties soon discovered that this in itself had not solved the problems confronting them, but had indeed created a number of fresh problems. Having freed themselves from undertakings regarding socialism which had come to be felt as a burden, they promptly found themselves facing the unpleasant fact that to lead parties which support the *status quo* has its advantages, but also definite disadvantages. The almost complete absence from their programmes of any long-term positive aims inevitably lessened the appeal these Social Democratic programmes could exert, and robbed them of a great part of the advantage over the bourgeois parties they used to enjoy in the eyes of working people. Although the word "socialism" continued to figure in party documents and statements, the sense in which it was used became more and more vague and undefined. The attempt to refurbish or dress it up with "moral" or "ethical" tags yielded little return in either propaganda or political terms. As for the modern-day "sacred cows" such as "the welfare state", by this time they were being very widely appealed to by all sorts of political groupings, even by conservatives. In a number of countries, especially those in which "socialist" governments were not very firmly in power, the balance began to tip in favour of bourgeois parties, and these proved flexible enough to recognise the need to carry out reforms where such were due, and to get their traditional image re-programmed "neo-capitalist" style and generally renovated.

Hence the truly feverish searchings for some new "symbol of faith" for Social Democracy, something which would make its image more original and attractive and help it to make a new breakthrough to power. In their desperate need for a new gospel, the

right-wing and centrist leaders and ideologists of Social Democracy snatched at the newly fashionable ideas linked with the scientific and technological revolution, and hastily began adapting them to the views they professed.

The basic trend of the ideas so used boils down to the assertion that the onset of the scientific and technological revolution itself changes, and changes radically, the conditions and the nature of society's development, and allegedly creates all the pre-conditions for the realisation of socialism. At the British Labour Party's annual conference in 1963, its new leader Harold Wilson said: "In all our plans for the future, we are re-defining and we are re-stating our Socialism in terms of the scientific revolution".¹ In a special policy statement, *Labour and the Scientific Revolution*, approved by the Conference, we find it asserted that "The prospect that the scientific revolution opens before us is a working life which is secure and interesting, in a society where machines are subordinate to man; a world in which hardship and suffering are progressively eliminated and the whole range of man's culture is available to enrich the lives of all".²

Support for the ideas of the scientific revolution and the social progress supposed to flow from it was proclaimed at this time by most of the other Social Democratic parties in the West, and found expression in a new declaration by the Socialist International too.³

In taking up as a weapon the idea of accelerated scientific and technological progress, Social Democracy laid the accent first and foremost on a "new role" that would belong to scientists and high-level technologists, to people with a high degree of specialised training, to trained managers and administrators, to the scientific and technological intelligentsia in general. In coming forward to support the idea of speeding up the training of as many such specialists as possible and rapidly promoting them to key posts in the economy, the administration and in political life, the Social Democrats clearly hoped to strengthen their own positions in the power system, speed up the process of bringing new men into top positions and into the ruling class generally, and by so doing, raise their own prestige with the general public.

It is not surprising, then, that this is the period when the leaders and ideologists of Social Democracy were most carried away by

¹ Report of the 62nd Annual Conference of the Labour Party, London, 1963, pp. 139-40.

² *Labour and the Scientific Revolution. A Statement of Policy*, London, 1963, p. 4.

³ See "The World Today—the Socialist Perspective. Declaration of the Socialist International", *Socialist International Information*, June 16, 1962, pp. 354-56.

the ideas of the "managerial revolution", according to which the "traditional" class of owner-capitalists was giving way, or had already given way, to highly-skilled hired managers. The idea of "managerisation", of raising the importance of the part played by specialists in the key areas of administrative and political activity, now becomes almost *idée fixe* with all, or nearly all, the Social Democratic parties. Much stress is also laid on the need to make the "new managerial class" more responsible to society,¹ to bring them within the sphere of influence of Democratic—i.e., above all Social Democratic—forces and organisations. Greater significance is therefore attributed to various forms of liaison by which the Social Democratic parties strengthen their ties with the "new class". In the Austrian Socialist Party this is done by building up the role of the Union of Socialist Academicians, which brought together eminent scientists and higher technologists, managers of nationalised concerns sympathetic to the Socialists, influential civil servants and administrators and many leading figures in the party, including its leader Bruno Kreisky. In Italy, some of the most ardent supporters of modernisation and efficiency, from the technocratic wing of the Socialist Party, were insistent at this time about the need to bring considerable numbers of specialists into the party.

The part played by such new men assumed greater importance in the leadership of the Belgian Socialist Party also. A typical example is the career of Professor A. Simonet of the University of Brussels, who became one of the Socialist Party's leading theoreticians, was elected to Parliament, became an administrator in a large monopoly concern, and at the end of the 60s became Minister of Economic Affairs.

In the Social Democratic Party of Germany the flirtation with technocracy manifested itself at this period in the appointment to the highest posts in the party and in state service of people such as professor of economics Karl Schiller. Brought on to the SPD executive in 1965 as an expert, in the very next year Schiller became Minister of Economics in the "great coalition" government. Under Schiller's direct influence the Council of Experts set up in 1963 was given new and much wider powers, and became one of the central links in "concerted action". It is significant that the fashion for technocracy which swept Western Social Democracy in the early 60s affected even the United Socialist Party, in which the prevalent ultra-left trend contrived to "lie down with the lamb"—with those professing most ordinary technocratic reformism.

Both ideologically and politically speaking, the technocratic leanings of Social Democracy had nothing original in them, being

¹ Ibid., p. 355.

based almost entirely on the works of bourgeois economists and sociologists, from Burnham to Galbraith. The only comparatively new feature here was the attempt to make technocratic ideas fit in with concepts and doctrines that had crystallised much earlier and then pass off the whole as a new model of the development of society. In doing this the Social Democrats stressed in every possible way that they were the ones who had the real potential for putting into practice a far-reaching modernisation of society under the conditions of the scientific and technological revolution, for mobilising the social forces needed to do it.

While the main agent of progress on the social plane was to be the elite of science and technology, on the political plane the main role was assigned to the bourgeois state—run by Social Democratic governments, of course. The stress which the Social Democrats had traditionally laid on the transforming role of the state was now made even greater. Noticeably more is made of the function of the state in orchestrating the private capitalist sector of the economy, of establishing partnership between the state and the private sectors. "State action, authorised by democratic decisions," says the 1962 Declaration of the Socialist International, "is essential to provide for a rapid rate of economic expansion, a sufficiently high level of investment and the swift application of modern scientific techniques. This involves economic and social planning as a central government responsibility."¹

All this meant a further strengthening of the Social Democratic tendency towards state-monopoly capitalism, and created the conditions needed for this to develop at a faster rate in Western countries. Hence on the whole favourable attitude taken by the most influential quarters of big business, particularly younger elements more involved with the state system, towards the new thinking of Social Democracy.

On the party level, the technocratic orientation of Social Democracy inevitably strengthened the trend, dominant already back in the 50s, towards changing the "one-sided", predominantly working-class, image of the party. The theory that the scientific and technological intelligentsia had an exceptional part to play in society served to justify a re-orientation in the direction of the "new middle classes" brought forth by the scientific and technological revolution, as the Social Democratic main socio-political base in society. It was presumed that the role of the working class was becoming less important anyway, and that before long it would be more or less totally absorbed into "the middle class".²

¹ *Socialist International Information*, June 16, 1962, p. 356.

² See, for example, C. A. R. Crosland, *The Conservative Enemy. A Programme of Radical Reform for the 1960s*, London, 1962, pp. 159-60.

This orientation led in most cases to a noticeable fall in the proportion of workers in the membership of the Social Democratic parties and among their electoral supporters. In the German Social Democratic Party, for example, the proportion of manual workers in the membership fell from 55 per cent in 1961 to 44.5 per cent in 1967, and then to 27.6 per cent in 1973.¹ In the British Labour Party, studies made in the early 60s showed that while there was a significant majority of workers in the membership as a whole, about half of the activists in local branches came from the middle class.² In the Italian Socialist Party the proportion of workers in the membership fell from 62 per cent in 1945 to 32 per cent in 1973.³

On the whole, the shifts in the proportional make-up of the memberships of the Socialist and Social Democratic parties were not such as to bring into question the nature of these parties as organisations of the working class, representing the interests of quite wide, reformist-inclined sections of the proletariat. As special studies have shown, the Socialists and Social Democrats of Western Europe continued throughout the 70s to receive the votes of mass groupings of industrial workers and of lower-grade clerical workers whose social and economic status put them, objectively speaking, within the present-day proletariat. In the first half of the 70s, working-class voters provided more than 70 per cent of the electoral support of the French Socialists, from 70 to 80 per cent of the mass base of the Italian Socialists and Social Democrats, and about 80 per cent of those voting for the SPD in West Germany. Among those voting for the Spanish Socialist Labour Party (PSOE), according to data for 1977, 46 per cent belonged to proletarian categories.

At the same time, though, it is an incontestable fact that the rapid progress of science and technology and the changes it produced in the structure of society, and specifically, the significantly increased role of the scientific and technological intelligentsia in society and in the state, did pose new problems for all working-class parties in the late 50s. But whereas the Communists, as we have already noted, directed their efforts towards making a truly scientific, class analysis of this development, and towards doing all to bring the new strata and groupings into the active struggle for democracy and socialism, the Social Democratic parties attempted to make use of these new phenomena to bolster up the existing order.

¹ O. K. Flechtheim, *Die Parteien der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, Hamburg, 1976, p. 402; *Die Zeit*, April 20, 1973.

² B. Hindess, *The Decline of Working-Class Politics*, London, 1971, p. 60.

³ *Partito Socialista: Struttura e organizzazione. Atti della Conferenza nazionale di organizzazione. (Firenze, 6-9 febbr. 1975)*, Venice, Marsilio, 1975, p. 331.

Although the efforts of Social Democracy to cash in on modish technocratic ideas did not bring quite the political gains it had counted on, they did have a certain amount of success. The slogans about "modernisation" which many Social Democratic parties proclaimed at this period did have a wide appeal for the public, and their specific pledges concerning rapid social, economic and scientific progress led to a certain broadening of the support given them. Interest in Social Democracy grew quite noticeably among the ruling class, which was not averse to offering it a certain place within the system of political power. All this led to a number of Social Democratic parties enjoying a share of governmental power in the early 60s, either as a result of electoral victories (in Britain in 1964 and 1966, and in Austria in 1966), or thanks to the formation of coalition governments (the "big coalition" in Federal Germany in 1966, the left-of-centre government in Italy in 1963, and the coalition between the Belgian Socialist Party and the Catholics in 1961). In these countries, and in those where Social Democrats retained governmental power gained earlier (Sweden, Austria, Norway, Denmark), the parties belonging to the Socialist International had a chance to demonstrate the viability of the ideas they had proclaimed, and show themselves capable of putting them into practice.

To begin with, the second coming to power of Social Democracy in Western countries produced some positive changes in the socio-economic field. In both Italy, Britain, the FRG and a number of other countries, some of the most pressing social reforms were carried through, moves were made towards finding solutions to the problems of regional development, measures were taken to improve the training and re-training of the workforce, some improvements were made to systems of general and vocational education. In Italy the power industry was nationalised, in Britain the steel industry.

But the principal effort of Social Democratic governments in this period was to foster the formation of huge monopoly concerns, to "rationalise" and "managerise" the apparatus of government, and generally, to extend considerably the state-monopoly regulation of the economy. Quite naturally, the main dividends of such a policy were reaped by large-scale capital. At the same time the working class and other strata of the working population, though at first having some things conceded them, soon began to feel increasingly the iron grip of "rational" state-monopoly policy.

The direct result of this development was a strengthening of the connections between the Social Democratic leadership and the ruling class, particularly the latter's technocratic and bureaucratic sections, and a progressive narrowing of the gap between the Social Democratic and the bourgeois parties. The originally proclaimed aim of rationalisation began more and more to emerge as a policy

of accord with large-scale capital. The influence of large-scale capital upon the policies of Social Democratic governments and ministers increased to such an extent that it was more and more becoming the principal factor determining their line of behaviour.

The application by Social Democratic governments in the 60s of incomes policies operating against the interests of working people inevitably led to a fall in the general prestige of several Social Democratic and Socialist parties. Quite soon some of them (the Labour Party in Britain, the Socialist Party in Italy) fell from government power altogether, while those who still kept government portfolios were due for much disillusionment.

In the upshot of Social Democratic terms of office in the 60s it became clear that there was no justification whatever for asserting that the interests of the new contingents of working people, the scientific and technological intelligentsia and other white-collar workers, differed essentially from those of the traditional working class. Since in reality the policies of Social Democratic governments struck at the interests of both old and new categories of workers they evoked growing dissatisfaction among both. In the event, the technocratic endeavour of Social Democracy brought about a decrease in its influence not only among the working class (including its newly recruited contingents), but also among a considerable section of the "new middle classes" which it had specially set out to attract.

An inevitable consequence of the right-reformist leaders' descent into policies of accord with large-scale capital, and of their neglect of traditional aspirations for social equality and social justice, was that conflicts within Social Democracy became more acute. This did not happen immediately, and the fight put up by the left wing within Social Democracy was not a simple, one-track matter. To begin with, the technocratic ideas and the illusions about an all-powerful alliance between science and politics rising above class all had their effect on a sizeable portion of rank-and-file Social Democrats, and on the left wing of Socialist parties. For a certain length of time this tended to damp down inner-party struggle. A definite lull in such struggle was to be observed in the early 60s in the British Labour Party, the French Socialist Party, the German Social Democratic Party and a number of other parties also. But by the mid-60s, and in the second half of the decade particularly, the face of things began to change very considerably within most of the parties.

Experiencing to their own disadvantage the results of the new social and political line followed by Socialist-led ministries, the mass of members and activists in the Social Democratic parties began to realise more and more clearly the disastrous nature of the

ideas fed to them, ideas to the effect that under the conditions of the scientific and technological revolution politics was no longer the business of the masses. From their own experience they quickly learn that if they are isolated from the political struggle or themselves abstain from it, that in itself immediately strengthens the position of the dominant classes, makes them still greedier, and not only fails to bring new advances for working people, but threatens to rob them of those made earlier.

Growing left-wing opposition within Social Democracy was seen practically universally from the mid-60s onwards. But it was most striking in the case of those parties which were then in power. Within a year of the Italian Socialist Party (PSI) joining the left-of-centre government, there was a split right through the party, and the secession of a part of it to form the Italian Socialist Party of Proletarian Unity (PSIUP). (The PSIUP ceased to exist in 1972, its members going either to the Communist Party or back to the PSI.) The PSI lost about one-third of its members. Approximately 60 per cent of those Socialists who worked in mass working-class organisations, in the trade unions especially, left to join the PSIUP. The percentage of the electorate voting for the Party also fell by about a third. And the biggest losses, both of voters and of party members, were among the working class.

Having announced "constructive realism" as its guiding principle, which in effect amounted to submission to the *status quo*, the PSI right-wing leadership thus provoked the split. Immediately after, it steered towards uniting with the right-reformist Italian Social Democratic Party (PSDI), and in 1966 these two amalgamated, to form the United Socialist Party (PSU). The result of the amalgamation was that the "technocratic" trend among Italian Socialists was still further strengthened, and the concept of a pragmatic, "de-ideologised" party based on the "democratic socialism" principle became predominant.

But the real processes taking place in the working-class and democratic movement in Italy, a new determined and prolonged wave of class struggle throughout the country beginning in the late 60s, rendered the consolidation engineered by the right-wing Socialists extremely unstable.

In the British Labour Party, too, there was a noticeable upsurge of resistance by the left wing to their right-wing leadership's policies. In 1965, just one year after the Victory for Socialism group had been disbanded prior to the 1964 election, a new left-wing group, the Tribune group, was set up within the Labour Party. Together with left-wing forces within the trade unions, it was active in opposing the policy of limiting wage increases pursued by the Wilson government from 1966. In their weekly *Tribune* and in the

public pronouncements of its members, the group voiced strong criticism of the policy of accord with big capital, and of the government's failure to implement election promises to extend public ownership, reduce military expenditure and make sweeping improvements in the social security system and other social services. The increasing resentment among the rank and file of the Labour Party and the trade unions over the government's policies was unequivocally expressed in this period in the resolutions debated at the party's annual conferences, at which delegates become increasingly insistent in their criticisms of their leaders' collaborationist policies.¹

In the German Social Democratic Party left-wing forces became noticeably more active in the latter part of the 60s. This period saw a strong leftward shift by the Young Socialists.² That organisation, uniting SPD members under 35, at this period had over 300,000 members (the SPD's total being about 700,000).

Dissatisfaction with the Social Democratic leaders also built up in the 60s in the Association of German Trade Unions, always closely linked with the SPD. On a number of questions the trade unions started to assume a stance to the left of the party leadership.

Even in comparatively untroubled parties, such as the Austrian Socialist and the Swedish Social Democratic Labour, a left-wing opposition began to take shape in the late 60s. A strong leftist trend, based on the youth movement and in part on the trade unions, emerged in the mid-60s in the Canadian New Democratic Party. In the Socialist Party of Belgium the left wing gained considerable strength.

In the case of the traditionally perturbed French Socialist Party, the conflict of various trends within it assumed quite a dramatic nature. The marked fall in popularity which the Party suffered in the early 60s, the price it had to pay for its inconsistencies over Algeria and the personal power regime, gave a new impetus to inner-party struggle. As the struggle proceeded, the right wing had increasingly to go over to the defensive. After the settlement of the Algerian problem at Evian in 1962 the main subject of disagreements was the question of alliances, i.e. primarily the attitude to be taken to the Communist Party.

For all the variety of forms, methods and specific activities by left-wing opposition within Social Democratic parties, some common features became evident by the late 60s. These were a rapid growth in the influence wielded by forces opposed to the right wing,

¹ See *Report of the 65th Annual Conference of the Labour Party*, Brighton, 1966, pp. 170-220.

² G. Börnsen, *Innerparteiliche Opposition (Jungsozialisten und SPD)*, Hamburg, 1969.

the more clear-cut positions they took up and entry of broad masses of the working class into direct struggle with the right. The trade unions came to occupy quite a special place, and their role grew in the struggle both over ideas and policies within the working-class movement, and for united action.

SOCIAL DEMOCRACY AND THE MOUNTING LABOUR MOVEMENT IN THE LATE 60s AND EARLY 70s

The development of Social Democracy became even more complex and contradictory from the end of the 60s on, when the class struggle became markedly more acute and many countries were in the grip of fierce social and political crises. Soon after the events which shook France in May and June 1968, one of Europe's oldest and typically collaborationist Socialist parties, SFIO in France, came to the end of the road and disintegrated. A severe internal crisis struck the Socialist movement in Italy. After defeat in the parliamentary elections in the summer of 1968, the United Socialist Party which had been formed in 1966 split up again, marking a collapse of the reformist, left-of-centre policy it had pursued for a whole decade. In Luxembourg, the Socialist Labour Party which had advertised its policy as a model of "class harmony" lost votes at the parliamentary election of 1968, left the government coalition, and in 1971 split up. In the same year internal dissension rent the Labour Party of the Netherlands, and one faction split off and formed an independent party. At the end of the 60s conflicts built up within the Socialist Party of Japan after it lost the parliamentary election of 1969.

From the second half of the 60s onwards, internal struggle over fundamental questions of social development became much more marked within the Belgian Socialist Party. Much the same picture could be seen within the Social Democratic Party of Germany and the Socialist Party of Austria, the latter being forced to go into opposition for the first time since the war when it lost the 1966 election. The position of Social Democracy grew shaky in its traditional bastion, Scandinavia. This was demonstrated by various elections to legislative bodies in the late 60s and early 70s, in which the Scandinavian Social Democratic parties, the strongest reformist labour parties of all in the field of parliamentary politics, got about the same number of votes as did the bourgeois parties. And 1970 saw the fall of the British Labour government.

The actual circumstances and political factors which produced this drop in the prestige of this or that Social Democratic Party were rather varied. But it is hardly accidental that the drop took place practically everywhere in the late 60s and the early 70s. This

was the period which increasingly showed up the insolvency of the Social Democratic line of treating class antagonisms as no longer operative within the welfare state under capitalism. The actual sharp increase in social conflict indicated the inability of the state-monopoly system to deal with urgent economic and social problems, and brought into question the policy pursued by Social Democracy as the most active supporter of the state-monopoly "renovation" of capitalism.

This crisis of social-reformist ideals of "social peace" and "affluent society" developed against a background of changes for the better in international relations, with the mainstays of the Cold War becoming gradually undermined through the "peace offensive" of world socialism and the powerful anti-war movement opposing American imperialist aggression in Vietnam. Discontent among the mass of the people was now directed not only against the home policies of state-monopoly capitalism, but against its international policies as well.

The explosion of class conflicts and surging democratic movements which started in the late 60s, unprecedented over the whole post-war period, destabilised the system of alliances which built up between the monopoly oligarchy and various socio-political forces within the capitalist world. Under the conditions of a general shift to the left Social Democracy's system of alliances also was subjected to change. This is a large part of the explanation for the increasing ideological and political differentiation to be observed in the ranks of Social Democracy, causing a serious exacerbation of inner-party struggle centred around the basic aims and strategic and tactical principles of social reformism.

At a time when the line followed by the ruling circles of capitalist countries was ceasing to be appropriate to the new conditions developing in social production and the new needs of the masses, it became very obvious that there was a discrepancy between the objective requirements and interests of the working class and the way in which these were expressed by the reformists, for in the 50s and 60s the actual social and economic policies of Social Democratic parties did not go beyond a state-monopoly re-structuring of capitalism. There appeared definite indications that Social Democratic platforms and policy statements were no longer accepted by the people forming the parties' mass base in the countries where those parties were in government, either singly or in coalition with right-wing or centrist parties. One such indication was the wave of wild-cat strikes. Furthermore mass working-class organisations hitherto dominated by Social Democratic ideas showed a tendency to adopt more independent policies, and to take up positions well to the left of their own political parties on a number of matters relating to the

development of society. In Britain, for instance, relations between the then ruling Labour Party and the trade unions became critical, tens of thousands of trade unionists breaking with the party.

A noticeable rift formed between the Social Democratic parties and the anti-establishment middle strata which had been open to their influence. These strata, primarily quite significant groupings of intellectuals, in the late 60s and early 70s quite frequently came out as supporters of new social needs within society, which were being sacrificed to technocratic recipes subordinating the social sphere to the needs of economic growth.

The mood prevailing among these sections of the population was all the more important to the Social Democratic parties because during the 60s their proportion in party memberships of the Socialist International considerably increased. In the German Social Democratic Party, for example, in 1972, less than 30 per cent of the membership were workers, with 34 per cent being clerical workers or public servants.¹ It is known that in the developed capitalist countries of Western Europe, where Social Democracy is most active, 20-25 per cent of these middle strata vote Social Democratic.

Another contributory factor to the strife within Social Democratic parties was the rise of stormy left-radical student movements with fiercely anti-capitalist views. Against this background, in the late 60s the youth sections of Social Democratic parties, previously wont to approve all decisions made by the parties sometimes even without a vote being taken, became active as never before. Now their activities began to go beyond the bounds prescribed for them from above; they took independent action in direct opposition to the reformist line. This phenomenon was seen even in the Austrian Socialist Party, the Dutch Labour Party and the Swedish Social Democratic Labour Party, parties within which there had been no serious ideological or political conflict during the whole of the post-war period. In the Netherlands it was this activity on the part of the youth sections which eventually led to the departure of the more right-wing leaders of the Labour Party, and helped that party's formulation of a number of progressive demands touching on problems of prime importance in the country's home and foreign policy. "Established ideas renewed by younger generations"² was how the Socialist International's official publication described the situation. The mood of opposition within the Austrian Socialist Party also was to a large extent the creation of its youth branch, the Junge Generation. The actions of young Austrian Socialists, from the late 60s on, against American aggression in Indochina, against the reac-

¹ S. Miller, *Die SPD vor und nach Godesberg*, Bonn-Bad Godesberg, 1974, pp. 65-69.

² *Socialist Affairs*, No. 2, 1971, p. 44.

tionary coups in Greece and in Chile, against the aggressive policies of Israel, were accompanied by fierce criticism of their own party.

In Canada, in Ontario and Saskatchewan the New Democratic Party (close to Social Democracy in its policies) expelled left-wing youth groups forming the Waffle Manifesto movement; these had accused the party leadership of operating procapitalist policies, and had accordingly refused to support the party's candidates in the 1972 federal election. The result was the formation of a youth organisation, For Independent Socialist Canada, calling for control over the country's economy to be put in the hands of "a working-class government".¹

The increasingly violent nature of such disagreements between Social Democratic parties and their youth sections became so glaring that the alarmed leaders of reformism held a special discussion of the problem during the 11th Congress of the Socialist International in 1969.

In the German Social Democratic Party, it was the activities of its Young Socialists which gave the clearest expression to the dissatisfaction with right-reformist theory and practice. From the late 60s on, the Young Socialists organisation became the backbone of the left wing. They attacked various aspects of party life, from the formulation of policy to the decision-making mechanism of the party's ruling body. In the course of the debate, which at times became heated in the extreme, the reformism of the party's right wing was subjected to criticism and attempts were made to formulate new ideological and political premises sometimes going beyond the bounds of the concepts traditionally acceptable in the Social Democratic movement.

This growth in the activity of young people was one of the factors leading to a drop in the overall average age of the Social Democratic parties' membership. For example, out of 135,000 persons joining the SPD in 1972, one-third were younger than 25, and three-quarters were under 40. And in the left wing of the French Socialist Party, CERES, 71 per cent of the members were under 35.²

This upsurge in youth activity, coinciding with mass movements by the working class, a growth of opposition among other social groups and with acute socio-political crises in a number of countries, signalled that in their pursuit of collaborationist policies the right-reformist leaders had come close to the danger point, with far-reaching adverse consequences just one step away. In this situa-

¹ *Canadian Forum*, No. 649, 1975, p. 20.

² See M. Charzat, G. Toutain, *Le CERES. Un combat pour le socialisme*, Paris, 1975.

tion Social Democracy faced the urgent task of restoring the waning faith of the masses whose support they needed. At the same time the leaders of Social Democracy were not oblivious of the fact that the growth of opposition among mass contingents of workers by hand and brain which formerly followed the lead of the bourgeois parties created new opportunities for extending the influence of Social Democracy.

THE "RETURN OF IDEOLOGY" IN THE EARLY 70s

A strategic and tactical re-orientation of Social Democracy called for, in the first place, an accommodation of the concept "democratic socialism" to fit in with the new conditions of development of state-monopoly capitalism, the stage characterised by an unprecedented growth in the importance of social factors in public life. This produced a desire to renovate the ideology and propaganda patterns of Social Democracy, to delineate more clearly its ideological and theoretical image. That desire was further stimulated by the sharp criticism directed against welfare state and the policy of class collaboration associated with it, criticisms voiced by the left in the reformist parties, wishing to find a theoretical interpretation to the contradictions of contemporary capitalism. The resurgence of ideology among Social Democrats in the 70s took the form of stormy theoretical discussions in which the basic premises of the doctrine of "democratic socialism" came under debate. The increased interest taken in theoretical matters was shown by the fact that some Social Democratic parties set up special study centres in order to renovate and propagate the doctrine of "democratic socialism". In West Germany, for instance, in 1973 the SPD opened an Institute for the Problems of Democratic Socialism; in Austria, the SPÖ founded the Karl Renner Political Academy. The Socialist International also organised research centres and groups for general studies and specific problems.

The theoretical discussions revealed varying trends in political thinking, corresponding to the various and contradictory tendencies existing within the Social Democratic movement. The left-wing trends, often calling for a "return to Marxism", called into doubt the theoretical premises supposed to justify "class peace", or at least tried to give those premises a content that would go some way towards satisfying the anti-capitalist mood of the broad masses of working people. The right were moved by other considerations. They were trying to find an ideological justification, by means of appropriate alterations to their reformist formulae and concepts, for their claim to represent a "third force" during the new, present stage of world development; their theoretical quest, therefore, re-

mained within the bounds of somewhat updated Social Democratic doctrine. As Bruno Kreisky told the British Labour Party's Conference of 1972, "So there are two main tasks for democratic socialists today. On one side we have to work out an alternative to communism and, on the other, to know that for the future of Europe it is decisive whether the ideas of conservatism or those of social democracy will eventually prevail."¹

The right were trying to present Social Democratic doctrine as a theoretical expression of a "constructive" opposition to capitalism. At the same time they directed their utterances against the theory and practice of scientific socialism, which evoked increasing interest in the capitalist world, including the Social Democratic movement, and the more so due to the growing economic and socio-political contradictions within contemporary capitalism which threw into clear relief the advantages of the dynamic and stable development in the countries of the socialist world. In other words, a moderate degree of "confrontation" with monopoly capital, within the strictly delineated confines of the doctrine of "class collaboration", accompanied by resistance to Marxist-Leninist revolutionary theory—that was the essence of the ideological activities of the right-wing Social Democratic leaders.

A certain change in the attitude to the theoretical legacy of Karl Marx that occurred in the ranks of the Social Democratic parties is typical of this period. While in the 60s nearly all the parties of the Socialist International denied any virtue in the ideas of Marx, labelling them as "out-moded", overtaken by history, by the end of the 60s, and in the 70s, not only the left, but some entirely moderate Social Democratic leaders and ideologists rated Marx's merits highly, and to some extent turned to his method in analysing the crisis of capitalist society. Bruno Kreisky and Anker Jorgensen spoke of the great value of his method, and of some of his conclusions.² But in most cases it was a matter of merely picking out fragments from Marx's heritage and recognising the value only of some particular conclusions taken out of context. Many "protagonists" of Marx within Social Democracy gave an abstract-humanistic tinge to his ideas, while others tried to interpret his ideas in a reformist spirit. Marx's ideas were eclectically mixed in with neo-Kantian and neo-positivist ideas quite alien to scientific socialism, and drowned in these ideas. The real idols of Social Democracy were philosophers hostile to Marxism, such as Karl Popper, whose ideas

¹ *Report of the 71st Annual Conference of the Labour Party. Blackpool 1972*, London, 1972, p. 143.

² B. Kreisky, *Aspekte des demokratischen Sozialismus. Aufsätze, Reden, Interviews*, Munich, 1975, p. 136; A. Jorgensen, "Demokratiet—vor vej til socialismen", *Solidaritet Lighed og Trivsel*, Copenhagen, 1975, p. 4.

were used to justify the general political concept of "democratic socialism".

The official utterances of a number of Social Democratic leaders and the documents of many of their parties do contain criticism of the welfare state; in a very generalised unspecific form they also contain references to the barren nature and lack of prospects of capitalism. "Democratic socialism" is put forward as the only real alternative.

The real meaning of the expression "democratic socialism", as a rule, boils down to democratisation of public life. "Our aim," declared Olof Palme, the Swedish Social Democratic leader, "is to keep extending the process of democratisation to more and more areas of the life of society."¹

Undoubtedly this declared aim, further democratisation of public life, was in the interests of working people, even if no substitute for the radical transformations required, and it touched feelings which at the turn of the 60s were affecting very many sections of society; it thus opened up a field for a dialogue on co-operation among various trends in the working-class movement. In this context the attention of the left was particularly attracted by the slogan of "economic democracy"—workers' participation in the management of production. Few in the Social Democratic movement believed as the French Socialists did that the point of departure for economic democracy must be "collective appropriation of the major means of production, investment and exchange".² More often the Social Democratic parties putting forward ideas on democratisation of relations at the point of production proceeded from the precept of preserving capitalist property forms, but with employees being brought into management processes by one means or another.³ As a rule, though, the Social Democratic interpretation of "economic democracy" involved no offensive against capital, but mere introduction of palliative measures. A characteristic example is the law passed by the West German Bundestag in 1976 on "participation", which did not even give the workers equal representation on a supervising council with management and owners. Right-wing Social Democracy interpreted worker participation in management in the spirit of "social partnership". "The main point for me," wrote the Danish Social Democrat Robert Pedersen, "is that by means of economic democracy a bridge can be built over the gulf that separates labour and capital."⁴

¹ W. Brandt, B. Kreisky, O. Palme, *Briefe und Gespräche 1972 bis 1975*, Frankfurt-am-Main—Köln, 1975, p. 23.

² Mitterrand, *l'homme, les idées*, Paris, 1974, p. 69.

³ See, for instance, S. Johansson, "Om övergången till socialismen i Sverige", *Tiden*, No. 7, 1975, p. 353.

⁴ *Aktuell*, November 26, 1975, p. 2.

Even in France, where the Socialists appeared to have made the most drastic shift in their position, the Socialist leaders had by no means foresworn reformist principles and formulations. The French Socialist Party, formed in 1971 after the demise of the SFIO and led by François Mitterrand, declared that it rejected "Social Democratic doctrine" in the sense of "making peace with capitalism", forming unprincipled coalitions with bourgeois forces and clinging to the anti-communist dogmas of the Cold War period. The Socialist Party doing its best to demonstrate that it had broken with the old SFIO of Guy Mollet, announced that its line was to break completely with capitalism, and switched over from purely tactical accommodations with the Communist Party to working for unity of the forces of the left.

On the ideological side, the Socialist Party stressed its desire to merge all the socialist trends (co-operators, Christian Socialists, etc.) and to avoid "official doctrine" which it felt led to dogmatism. The leaders of the party declared their fidelity to "the idea of class", thus trying to separate themselves from the "bridge between classes" approach of right-wing Social Democracy; they proclaimed that the Socialist Party could not be "a party for all". They defined the social base from which they were to operate as "the class front", uniting all who worked for pay—workers, clerical personnel and intelligentsia. As François Mitterrand put it, those who worked for pay made up over two-thirds of the active population; they were a numerical majority, and the task was to see to it that they became the political majority.¹

The socio-economic programme of the Socialist Party included, besides reforms relating to higher living standards for the workers, better social security system, etc., customary in Social Democratic policy, the nationalisation of banks and credit institutions, several key industries and major monopoly concerns. As well as such nationalisation they proposed wide use of mixed state-and-private ownership of large concerns, with the state having a controlling holding.

As the arguments over the application of the Common Programme showed, the Socialists wished to keep nationalisation down to the minimum essential, in their opinion, to give the state leverage to guide the development of the economy via government orders and selective crediting. Any extension of nationalisation beyond these limits (which themselves by far do not include all major monopolies) should depend, in the opinion of the socialist leadership, on the nationalised concerns proving their economic efficiency. By and large, the Socialist socio-economic programme was orientated to-

¹ F. Mitterrand, *Un socialisme du possible*, Paris, 1970, p. 52.

wards a "mixed" economy within which market forces (economic viability, profit, competition, etc.) would function, but "guided and limited" by democratic planning. The latter should be, according to the leaders of the PSF, not "directive" (as in the socialist countries) but "contractual", i.e. based on agreement between planning bodies and the concerns themselves on the indices to be aimed for.

Neither "mixed economy" nor selective nationalisation is anything new in principle so far as Social Democratic programmes are concerned. Realising this, and anxious to prove the originality of their "socialist project", the PSF laid great stress on the "self-management" idea. "The three themes of our strategy," declared Mitterrand, "are today inseparable: union of the left, the class front, self-managing socialism."¹ "Self-management", a rather vague and amorphous idea, was more of a protest against the bureaucracy and suppression of personal initiative which are typical of state-monopoly capitalism, than a definite, constructive plan for social transformation. The party proposed to implement "self-management" principally through decentralisation of the state apparatus, by giving greater independence to the various enterprises within the nationalised sector, democratising their management, developing regional autonomy and that of towns, communities, etc.

A kind of summing-up of the French Socialists' evolution during the 70s is provided by the new programme document, "Projet socialiste", published in 1980² after approval by a consultative conference of active party members. It states a number of anti-monopoly and anti-capitalist theses formulated by the left-wingers within the party and proclaims the need for far-reaching transformations of society. The aims put forward—struggle against capitalism, full employment and greater equality in material wealth for the working people—are supposed to be achieved by extending planning to the big concerns while retaining capitalist market mechanisms in operation so far as marketing, prices and wages are concerned.

Contrast between the verbal recognition of the urgent need to make socialist transformations and the limited nature of the actual policies pursued is typical of a number of Social Democratic parties experiencing a "return to ideology"—the British Labour Party, the Belgian Socialist Party, the Socialist Party of Japan and others.

The SPJ's programme, *Japan's Road to Socialism and the Struggle in the 1970s* (approved at its 30th Congress in 1968) noted that there were favourable conditions in the country for achieving socialism by combining the mass anti-imperialist struggle led by the

¹ *L'Unité*, October 31, 1975, p. 6.

² *Projet socialiste. Pour la France des années 80*, Paris, 1980.

working class with the SPJ's parliamentary action. Yet the economic programme the party suggested for a coalition government contained no demands for radical transformation of existing relationships and was confined to declarations of support for the principles of democratisation of management and planning and greater democratic control over the activities of the monopolies.

On the whole, the reforms proposed by Socialists and Social Democrats in fact amounted to nothing more, in most cases, than an updated version of state-monopoly regulation, with greater attention than previously being paid to the social demands of the working masses.

This defect, congenital to reformism, was something which the left-wing trends opposed to the leaderships in the parties concerned did their best to remedy, starting from different positions in theory and methodology. At the turn of the 70s the political and, especially, ideological influence of these trends grew considerably. One can say that theirs was the leading role in the formulation of the most radical anti-capitalist statements included in party documents and in attempts to map out a programme of democratisation of the social and political order which went further than the usual parliamentarianism.

The left in Social Democracy internationally are not a single, integrated trend; their ideological and political characteristics vary greatly from one country to another, and even within one party they are heterogeneous. Yet their positions, their theoretical conclusions and their activities show many common features.

On the theoretical side, the activities of the left are in most cases based on the ideas of Marxism, though these are not infrequently revised and distorted. They accept Marx's analysis of the fundamental contradiction within capitalism and take a class approach recognising that the class struggle is the main motive force in social progress. On a number of questions relating to the reorganisation of society (problems of property, the state, the way in which revolution might develop, etc.) they sometimes support ideas and formulations which have much in common with those advanced by the Communist parties.

But it is characteristic of most of the Social Democratic left that they have not mastered Marxist methodology fully and their ideas on how radical transformation is to be achieved are incoherent. While formally recognising the correctness of a number of the basic theses in Marx's theory, they frequently take such theses right out of the general conceptual approach of Marxism to the transformation of society. They often present Marxism in a Social Democratic or left-reformist version, often in weird combination with fashionable trends in contemporary bourgeois philosophy and sociology. As

a whole they do not accept Leninism as the development of Marx's theory. And hence, as a rule, flows their nihilistic attitude to the theory and practice of existing socialism and to the Marxist-Leninist positions of the Communist parties.

The left-wing Social Democrats severely criticise their right-wing leaders' refusal to contemplate radical re-organisation of society, and their reformist projects. They have done much to discredit the concepts of right-wing Social Democracy. This applies particularly to the many documents and works emanating from the radical group known as "Stamokap"¹ in the Young Socialists (West Germany), also to the left club CERES within the French Socialist Party and the left-wing Labour Tribune group in Britain.

The programmes for transformation of society advanced by these groups and their more specific plans for immediate reforms are of a more consistently anti-monopoly and socialist nature than those put forward by the right-wing and centrist groupings of Social Democracy. The French left-wingers of CERES, for instance, insist on more far-reaching and more clearly defined anti-monopoly measures for nationalisation than those proposed by the leadership of the Socialist Party. The Young Socialists in West Germany call for public ownership of key industries and for central planning, but with a degree of comparative autonomy being left to the enterprises involved. The left-wing Labour members of the Tribune group are in favour of effective state control of the monopolies (including nationalisation of the biggest and most influential of these).

The left are distinguished by their active seeking for ways of realising true democracy, something more real than the institutions of bourgeois democracy. The main line of this quest lies in working out more precise and realistic ideas of self-management—worker participation in management, worker control. Many within the left (CERES, Stamokap on the left wing of the Young Socialists) recognise the leading role of the working class in the revolutionary process. According to Jean-Pierre Chevènement, leader of CERES, the main motive force in the "revolution of self-management", which he sees as a radical departure from capitalist society, is to be the working class.²

One of the main points on which the left disagree with their party right-wing and centrist leaders is the question of mass movements, which the left insist should be activated and must be decisive in the fight for peace and for social and economic reforms, and also for power and the radical transformation of society. The left-wingers attack political actions by Social Democratic governments which

¹ An acronym formed from "state monopoly capitalism", and used to denote a group which supports the theory of state monopoly capitalism.

² J.-P. Chevènement, *Le vieux, la crise, le neuf*, Paris, 1974, p. 167.

harm the interests of working people and democratic rights in general. The leaders of the Young Socialists described the social and economic policies of the Schmidt government as "submission to large-scale capital"; this movement is also active in the fight against the *Berufsverbot*.

While they stress, as a rule, their differences in principle as regards the ideological stance and the practice of the communist movement, the left-wing Socialists do, however, exhibit a much greater readiness, compared to their party leadership, to co-operate with Communists. Thus the Young Socialists, having declared the Communist Party to be a "political opponent", simultaneously came out in favour of working together with that party on the committee Down with *Berufsverboten* and on the Communist-led Committee for Peace, Disarmament and Cooperation. This gave rise to a sharp conflict between the Young Socialists and SPD leadership which resulted some years back in K.-U. Benneter, the Young Socialist leader, being removed from his post.

In the field of foreign policy the left Socialists typically take a much more consistent line than the party leadership on such matters as the fight for detente and peaceful coexistence and against the arms race, and their attitude to NATO and to the plans for further political and military integration of Western Europe is unenthusiastic or downright hostile.

While they devote much time and energy to theoretical work and to party infighting, the left-wing Socialists are often largely divorced from practical mass work. Their ideological and theoretical presentations often bear the imprint of the ultra-left trends of the late 60s; they contain a strong element of the cult of spontaneous action and are marked by utopianism, by an abstract, schematic approach to the problems of revolutionary change. The social base of the left Socialists is mainly confined to the intelligentsia; they have not as yet succeeded in gaining any significant influence within the working class or the trade unions. And in terms of organisation, in a number of countries the left-wing trends are amorphous, fragmented.

All the factors mentioned limit the influence and importance of the left-wing trends within Social Democracy. Nevertheless, their activities contribute to ideological and political differentiation within Social Democracy and to strengthening positive tendencies in its ideology and practice.¹

¹ The struggle of ideas between left and right on fundamental questions of aims, strategy and tactics at the present stage is dealt with in detail in specialised works by Soviet authors (e.g., *Ideology of Reformism Today*, Moscow, 1970; G. S. Sogomonyan, *Apologetic Concepts of Social-reformism*, Moscow, 1975; S. P. Peregudov, *The Labour Party's Role in the Socio-*

Although the central programmatic formulations of Social Democracy remained unaltered in the 70s and "democratic socialism" was, as before, put forward as the optimal means of advance to a classless society, the actual content of the concept did not remain the same. Mass discontent over still unsolved social problems, the doubts cast on traditional spiritual and cultural values, and the build-up of authoritarian, anti-popular and anti-democratic tendencies among the supporters of monopoly capital, combined to force the official circles of Social Democracy to bring back into use such concepts as "freedom", "justice", "solidarity", etc., etc. They came to be linked with questions such as guaranteeing the rights of the individual and bringing public opinion to bear upon decision-making at all levels. Here the Socialists and Social Democrats of West Germany, Austria, France, and Switzerland differed somewhat from the British Labour Party and the Swedish Social Democratic Labour Party which continued to speak, for preference, about the traditional social and economic themes, though not neglecting the new ones entirely. This was in line with their more pragmatic approach in the wake of the "end of ideology" trend.

The upsurge in ideological and political activity among Social Democrats in the late 60s and early 70s, a contradictory process with waverings to and fro, was accompanied by a loud propaganda campaign in which the German Social Democrats and the Austrian Socialists set the tone. They advertised their renovated ideological formulations and programmes of action as a universal alternative for the future, as denoting a new departure in the Social Democratic movement.¹ Similar claims are expressed by the leaders of other Social Democratic parties also, and are to be found in their programmes and election manifestoes.

The actual policies of Social Democratic governments are far removed from the proclaimed aims. A typical example is the line taken in home policy by the German Social Democratic Party, from the time when it came to power in 1969. Throughout the 60s the leadership of the party had been able to grasp the existing long-term trend in the social and economic development of the FRG, which was opposed by the Christian Democratic/Christian Social government. The practice of state-monopoly regulation established under the Christian Democrats, which effectively ruled out any systematic intervention by the state in the economic sphere, was a block

Political System of Great Britain, Moscow, 1975; M. A. Neimark, *The Belgian Socialist Party: Ideology and Policy. 1945-1975*, Moscow, 1976; *Social Democratic and Bourgeois Reformism in the System of State-Monopoly Capitalism*, Moscow, 1980—all in Russian).

¹ *Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschland. Parteitag, Saarbrücken 1970*, Bonn, 1970, p. 479.

in the way of the long overdue re-structuring of the national economy and of any development of the social infrastructure. This worsened the position of the masses, on the one hand, evoking discontent and protest, and on the other hand, it accentuated the contradiction between the immediate, current interests of monopoly capital and the interests of capital's global, long-term regulation, which led to increased friction between various capitalist groupings.

In this situation the SPD offered its own strategy for regulating socio-economic and political processes. From 1969 on, and more especially after its electoral success in 1972, it set on foot a series of social reforms under the banner of improving "the quality of life". But not one of these reforms, not even the most effective of them, relating to pensions, was fully realised. A draft reform of the education system remained largely on paper. In a situation beset with economic difficulties, the SPD's main preoccupation came to be with bolstering up the stability of capitalist society—which they felt might be endangered by far-reaching social reforms.

Neither the reforms carried out, nor the ones planned, in any way infringed upon the established order of life under state-monopoly capitalism. "It should be clear," declared H. Schmidt, "that there can be no radical transformations."¹ The SPD policy was founded upon a neo-Keynesian model of development, which provided for a more active re-distribution of part of the national budget through state bodies in order to regulate the economy and social affairs in the general interests of the state-monopoly system which required action to ensure further expanded capitalist reproduction. At a conference of industrial and commercial representatives in 1971, Willy Brandt acclaimed a capitalist market economy as being the most optimal instrument of "social equilibrium" and free enterprise as the principal lever for "reforming or even revolutionising production structures".² "We," he said, "aim at improving the infrastructure, thereby creating the conditions needed for a properly functioning market economy, for an economy in which the modern entrepreneur will take his rightful place."³ The Social Democratic Party was trying to show that by reformist half-measures it could regulate relations between the different strata and groupings of bourgeois society in such a way as to keep it politically stable. It can hardly be accidental that the SPD now has several tens of thousands of entrepreneurs among its membership.

So the practice of social-reformism has revealed the complete in-

¹ *Das 198. Jahrzehnt. Eine Team-Prognose für 1970-1980*, Hamburg, 1969, p. 328.

² See *Bulletin des Presse- und Informationsdienstes*, No. 29, 1971, pp. 300, 302.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 307.

solvency of the "democratic socialism" programme as a way of moving towards a "classless" society—and that in a country whose economy has been less subject to crises liable to complicate the passage of social reforms.

Even more limited were the results of Labour government (1974-79) policies in Britain, where the government faced a situation of severe crisis made worse by 4 years of Conservative government. The gap between the line which Labour in office actually pursued, and the ideals proclaimed in its *Labour Programme for Britain 1973* very soon became clear. The government's "social contract" policy turned out in the event to mean wage restraint, cuts in expenditure on the social services and a fall in real incomes for working people as a whole, which accorded ill with the declared aim "to bring about a fundamental and irreversible shift in the balance of power and wealth in favour of working people" and "to bring about a society . . . where production is for people's needs, not for private profit".¹ No doubt, Labour Party policy did aim at combatting inflation, which adversely affected the interests of working people, at employing intervention by the state to mitigate the evil consequences of the economic crisis, and at restraining to some extent the selfish aspirations of monopoly capital.

Among the positive actions in this context one can point to the repeal by the Labour government in 1974 of anti-labour legislation brought in by the Conservatives, and to the passage of a number of measures on pensions, the health service, housing, social security and, last but not least, labour relations. But the working people had to pay for all this, not only through rises in the cost of living but by observing a sort of "social truce"—an abandonment of active policies on the part of the trade unions. The "social contract" became a fresh version of "social partnership", i.e. of a reformist "reconciliation" of the interests of workers and capitalists. The "long-term" aims referred to by Labour, such as expansion of the state sector and increased state intervention in the affairs of private business, did not go to the length of attacking the basic principles of capitalism as a system.

Thus the "return of ideology" to the Social Democratic parties in the early 70s, despite all the publicity and big words, produced rather limited effects. The actual policies of Social Democratic parties very soon demonstrated that the "new" concepts in no way meant that their leaders were abandoning the policy of class collaboration, or that the economic and social condition of working people was going to be improved.

¹ *Labour Programme for Britain 1973*, London, 1973, p. 7.

SOCIAL DEMOCRACY AND THE DEEPENING GENERAL CRISIS OF CAPITALISM

The slump of 1974-1975, and the serious economic situation which persisted throughout the succeeding years, were visible proof that there was indeed a distinct worsening in all aspects of the general crisis of capitalism. The Social Democrats could no longer deny that there was a connection between these phenomena and the economic structure of capitalist society, the operation of the laws of a market economy. "The crisis of the capitalist system is a fact," declared Olof Palme, the Swedish Social Democratic leader.¹

However, only a few of the parties in the Socialist International (mainly in the countries of South-Western Europe) drew the conclusion that what was needed was "the destruction of capitalism". By and large the general effect of the manifestations of crisis upon the attitudes of Social Democrats was negative, a fear of possible "catastrophic" development of events preventing them from carrying through the reforms they had themselves proposed. Right-wing Social Democracy, though, succeeded in making its position somewhat safer, in achieving a certain consolidation of the party ranks. It managed to do so partly through the leaders of parties borrowing some of the left-wing weapons in these crisis years (criticism of capitalism, in particular of an unregulated market economy; calls for greater emphasis on planning and for development of democracy in the economy"; stronger anti-imperialist thrust in foreign policy; recognition of the need for mass support and the work of voluntary organisations, etc.).

It was to "improved" regulation by the state, not to anti-monopoly or anti-capitalist changes, that the leading circles of most Social Democratic parties looked to get them out of crisis. By setting bounds to the freedom of operation of the market economy, social-reformism hoped to save the industrial society, i.e., the basis of the capitalist system. To do this, which in the opinion of the right-wing Social Democratic leaders was beyond the power of the bourgeois parties with their reactionary utopian plans for a return to "free capitalism", might present them with their "historic opportunity", the chance to preserve and strengthen the positions of the parties of "democratic socialism".

When it came to discussing and endorsing the documents which were to define the actual domestic policy line of Social Democracy, there were sharp tussles involving ideas and theory. An example of these is provided by the long and lively debate which took place in the German Social Democratic Party around the Guidelines for

¹ W. Brandt, B. Kreisky, *O. Palme*, op. cit., p. 118.

1975-85. The programme envisaged a series of reforms intended to modernise the economy and the social infrastructure of West German society along the lines of the formulations on "democratic socialism" enshrined in the SPD's Godesberg programme. The sharp conflicts which arose over the content of the Guidelines led to the first draft being rejected at the Party's 1973 Congress in Honover. The programme was approved only at the Mannheim Congress in 1975.¹

The leaders of West German Social Democracy made a compromise with the left wing concerning some of the programme aims of "democratic socialism". This allowed them to keep within the programme the usual reformist formulations on "improving" the system by more efficient management and by slow, gradual changes in the sphere of distribution. They came out against replacing private ownership of the means of production and market competition by state planning; and they deliberately refused to adopt any "ready-made plan for a new social order". While admitting in theory the necessity, in some cases, of transferring the means of production to public ownership, they offered no specific plans for nationalisation. As regards the democratic rights of working people, the SPD proposed only an extension of the already existing systems of "participation" at enterprises ("partnership in ownership"), this being in the main an instrument of class collaboration, a way of getting the working class and its organisations to submit to the aims of the capitalist entrepreneurs. And the social and economic policies of the Schmidt government were in full accord with these precepts.

The revision of programmes, the outcome of a long ideological and political evolution, went on in several other parties along much the same lines as in the SPD. New programmes were adopted by the Belgian Socialist Party (1974), the Swedish (1976) and the Danish (1977) Social Democratic Parties, and documents of principles were passed by the British Labour Party in 1973 and 1976. In all these programmes, phrases "condemning" capitalism or about "breaking" with it actually meant only rejection of the already discredited "welfare state" concepts. To some extent this applies also to the policy statements of the French Socialist Party, despite the much more radical tone of the anti-capitalist declarations they contained.

This moderate degree of theoretical confrontation of monopoly capitalism has behind it not a determination to forswear class collaboration, but mere dissatisfaction with the methods of state-monopoly regulation which had produced a fresh outbreak on socio-economic and political contradictions within bourgeois society. The "re-

¹ See *Ökonomisch-politischer Orientierungsrahmen für die Jahre 1975-1985 in der vom Mannheimer Parteitag der SPD am 14. November 1975 beschlossenen Fassung*, Bonn, 1975.

novation" of Social Democracy's programmes reflects the efforts by contemporary reformist socialism to find a way out of the economic, social and political crisis of capitalist society, to use its own preferred methods to damp down acute class conflicts, and ultimately to maintain the illusion that it is possible to construct a "just society" through "social partnership" and "peace between classes".

The approval of new programmes by no means meant an end to struggle within the Social Democratic movement. This appeared in its most acute form within the British Labour Party, where the right-wing leadership had first made concessions to the left but then continued to pursue policies differing radically from statements included in the newly approved programme documents under pressure from the left. The Labour government refused to bring the biggest monopolies and banks under public control; the response of the left was to step up their struggle to democratise the organisational structure and decision-making in the party, to give a greater role to the rank and file and to end the "independence" of the Parliamentary Labour Party. The struggle over these matters reached its height after the party's electoral defeat of 1979, when the disastrous consequences for working people of the right wing's "consensus politics" became especially apparent.

The left-wing forces in the German Social Democratic Party also continued to exert strong pressure against the policies of the leadership. Although the sharpened contention between the ruling party and the Christian Democratic opposition produced by the 1980 elections to the Bundestag had some effect in reducing the acridity of inner-party debate and helped to bring together the various trends within the SPD, the Young Socialists at their Hanover Congress (in June 1980) still subjected to harsh criticism many aspects of the home and foreign policies pursued by the government led by Social Democrats. They condemned the decision of West German ruling circles to permit the deployment on West German soil of American nuclear missiles, they stressed their determination to resist all attempts to "limit political democracy", and above all they called on the government to repeal *Berufsverbot*.¹

In the French Socialist Party, R. Rocard came to play the key role in the opposition to the leadership's line in the late 70s. The characteristic tone of his pronouncements was a combination of revamped reformist formulations with anti-etatist notions of decentralisation and self-government. While calling on the party to avoid excessive concentration upon the electoral struggle and to strengthen its links with the mass movement, he also denied the role of the state in future socialist transformations, reducing the latter to a

¹ See *Vorwärts*, June 5, 1980.

series of piecemeal reforms, with a considerable portion of the functions of the market being left untouched.

The insolvency of Social Democracy's reformist strategy is shown up most glaringly in those cases where there is a real possibility of undermining the capitalist system. The Portuguese Socialist Party, having gained strength on the mounting wave of the 1974 anti-fascist democratic revolution and enjoying wide support from other Socialist International parties, used its influence to slow down the process of revolution in every possible way. When it came to office it retreated step by step under pressure from the forces of reaction, pursuing a policy which in fact meant gradual emasculation of the achievements of the Portuguese revolution.

Social Democracy's theoretical constructions concerning "social democracy" and "democratic socialism" find practical application in the development and testing of better methods of state-monopoly regulation. That activity is, in essence, also their answer to the problems arising out of the development of imperialist integration, the operation of the EEC and the increased power of the multinationals. On the one hand, these are attempts to "regulate", within the range of the capitalist system leverage, the conflicting interests of the continent's national monopolies, and to damp down the social and economic contradictions thus produced via specially created regional political institutions. On the other hand, there are attempts to soften, to some extent, the impact of social and class conflicts through special "European" programmes to maintain employment, to protect labour, to implement regional policies, to protect the environment, and so on and so forth. Any democratic content in these measures, in operation or under consideration, is limited by the framework of the capitalist system, and the experience of many years shows that it hardly corresponds to the sweeping assertions made about radical reconstruction of European economic and political life along socialist lines, through setting up integrated continental systems.

Reformist principles also underlay Social Democracy's recipes for dealing with the rapid expansion of the multinational monopolies in the 70s, an expansion which has perceptibly exacerbated not only the conflict between labour and capital, but also the contradictions between the interests of the international financial oligarchy and those of wide sections of capitalist society. Social Democratic plans in this field, while formally representing an alternative to capitalism, in reality amounted to conservation of the existing economic system.

The same tonality pervades the Social Democratic parties' efforts to find satisfactory answers to those threats to the stability of the capitalist economy world-wide which arise from the growing political and economic independence of countries once on the colonial periphery of imperialism, and their concrete measures planned

to reduce the increasing tension between the industrial capitalist West and the developing countries. In the 70s this problem was a constant centre of attention at numerous inter-party gatherings and discussion meetings of Social Democrats. While recognising the inability of capitalism to achieve "harmonious" economic relations between countries or to ensure a decent living standard in developing countries, the Social Democratic parties offer nothing in the nature of a radical programme to deal with the most pressing economic problems in this field. A typical comment is that of the SPD weekly *Vorwärts* concerning the debate on these questions which took place at the 13th Congress of the Socialist International in 1976: "A lot of rhetoric, few decisions."¹

There was much rhetoric, again, during the discussion of a wide range of current problems at the 14th Congress of the Socialist International in Vancouver (1978). Although speeches from the rostrum of this Congress contained quite drastic criticism of the capitalist system and references to "the growing crisis of the late-stage capitalist system",² on the whole the decisions taken were in the nature of general appeals, offering no practical programme of struggle against the economic and political omnipotence of monopoly capital.

* * *

Amid the socio-political and economic upheavals of the late 60s and the 70s, Social Democracy was objectively faced with a choice: either to take the road of profound social and economic changes which would mean the end of the capitalist economic system, or to go along with the methods of combatting crisis which are employed by state-monopoly capitalism (a hard line in socio-economic policy, an austerity policy, in other words an attempt to attain an economic upswing at the expense of the working people). What was on the agenda was essentially the cardinal question of the attitude to be taken to capitalism, of the choice between breaking with it, or operating within the limits of the capitalist system.

Social Democracy proved incapable of making a clear-cut choice in favour of the first option. A number of parties—the French Socialist Party, the Spanish Socialist Labour Party, the British Labour Party, the Japanese Socialist Party—expressed their support, though not very decisively or consistently, for a principal change of socio-

¹ *Vorwärts*, December 2, 1976, p. 15.

² Bernt Carlsson, *Report by General Secretary on the Activities of the Socialist International during the Period between the Congresses in Geneva, November 26-28, 1976 and Vancouver, November 3-5, 1978*, Vancouver, 1978, p. 14.

economic course, for certain anti-monopoly reforms. The parties in Central and Northern Europe, which either held governmental power or had held it in the recent past, the West German SPD and the Scandinavian Social Democrats in particular, continued in the main to keep to their previous line. In doing so, however, they could not ignore the deep disillusionment with capitalist ways of running the economy that was felt by the public in general. Hence the stern criticism of capitalism, even if only in the nature of declarations, which is to be found in the documents of the Socialist International and its constituent parties in the mid- and late 70s. The resolutions passed at the 13th Congress, for instance, show the shipwreck there had been of Social Democratic illusions concerning state monopoly reconstruction to cure the basic faults of capitalism. Those resolutions refer to "the crisis of world capitalism", to its "severe defeat" and "fiasco", and in diametric opposition to the theses of the 1951 Frankfurt declaration, the unplanned, anarchic nature of contemporary capitalism, not only of the "classical" capitalism of the past, is admitted.

The real import of this criticism, though, was confined to the conclusion that the capitalist market was incapable of self-regulation, and that "private enterprise" must be complemented by more up-to-date regulation by the state.

In its main aspects, then, Social Democratic policy in the 70s did not offer any genuine answer to the now urgent issues of radical transformation of bourgeois society. It attempted, at most, to soften a little the impact on the working people of the effects of crisis in the capitalist economy. The policies of Social Democracy's leadership have a certain appeal for some sections of large-scale capital, which calculate that social-reformist parties enjoying broader and more mass support, in members and in votes, than do the bourgeois parties, and having more space for manoeuvre, can be useful in localising and damping down the existing or imminent areas of conflict, thus allowing the bourgeoisie to gain time and find their own ways of stabilising state-monopoly capitalism.

But at the same time the most conservative, most militant and very powerful monopoly groupings are attempting to go over to the offensive against the working class and the gains it has achieved, and to remove from power any forces opposing them in this. This kind of line among conservative circles led, for instance, to the fall of a Labour government in Australia and was instrumental in bringing about the electoral defeat of Labour in Britain. Quite often the bourgeoisie makes skilful use of the weak points of social-reformism. By playing on popular dissatisfaction with the half-measures of the Swedish Social Democrats, for example, in the 1976 elections the bourgeois parties succeeded in seriously embarrassing

and forcing into opposition a party which in the 44 years it had been constantly in power had largely exhausted its repertoire, under present-day conditions, of possible reforms in the spirit of "democratic socialism".

The Swedish experience is instructive in another respect also. It confirms the falsity of those optimistic forecasts of an irresistible and irreversible forward march of the Social Democratic parties; that advance was handicapped and proved insecure under conditions of cyclical crisis and its resultant economic difficulties. In the specific situation of the 70s Social Democracy found itself facing grave difficulties, in particular those caused by dismay and panic among the petty-bourgeois sections of the people which had followed the Social Democrats in better times. The opportunist way in which Social Democracy accommodates its vaguely expressed democratic desires and socialist hopes to the needs of the moment and the shifting moods of the motley electorate, renders it vulnerable in the party-political competition for reformist influence on the masses. Since the bourgeois parties also have accumulated considerable experience in political manoeuvre and play upon the public mood, when circumstances are favourable they can push Social Democracy aside. Parties dedicated to reformist socialism are hampered in their actions when they take the lead in political terms too. Even then they are obliged to take decisions which are on the whole acceptable to the monopoly combines and finance capital, the real owners of economic and political power in bourgeois society. The disillusionment and dissatisfaction which is then evoked among the general public causes periodic outbreaks of distrust towards the ideological and practical recommendations of "democratic socialism". Such is the objective logic of political development, which punishes Social Democracy for its opportunism and constantly undermines its position.

The unsatisfactory balance-sheet which Social Democracy had to face at the end of the 70s, the failure of its hopes that a "return to ideology" and a renewal of its stock of political ideas would ensure it a more stable position in political life, left the Social Democratic parties confronted more closely than ever by the cardinal question of what is to be their place and their role in the working-class movement and in the fight for a radical economic and political transformation of bourgeois society. The same problem for them is posed again by the advancing development of the working-class movement itself and the merger processes within it, increasingly at odds with the collaborationist strategy and tactics and the very ideological basis of right-wing reformism.

Chapter 14

FIGHT FOR WORKING-CLASS POLITICAL UNITY IN THE INTERESTS OF PEACE, DEMOCRACY AND SOCIAL PROGRESS

NEW INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL CONDITIONS AND THE PROBLEM OF UNITY

The growth of the working-class and democratic movement in the capitalist countries and the need to step up the fight against the threat of nuclear war and curb the arms race in the new, third stage of capitalism's general crisis added urgency to the question of working-class political unity. The deep-going rift within the working-class movement weakened the positions of the proletariat and all other democratic forces on the political scene at home and internationally, acting as a brake in the fight for vital issues facing the progressive forces all over the world.

On the political plane at home the split of the working-class movement enhanced the influence of reactionary forces and made it easier for big capital to consolidate its social and political hegemony. On the international plane, it seriously weakened the role of the working-class movement as the staunchest and the most effective champion of peace in capitalist countries, enabled imperialism to set different sections of the working people at loggerheads with each other, and inhibited unity in the fight for peace among the main revolutionary streams of our time, above all the socialist world and the working-class movement in capitalist countries.

But since the mid-50s the problem of working-class political unity derived its urgency not only from the greater need for co-operation between the political forces in its ranks and not only from the new tasks they faced, but also from the greater opportunities that resulted from the progressive development of the working-class movement in capitalist countries. The intensification of the class struggle and its inner logic came into ever greater conflict with the limitations imposed by the split and spontaneously destroyed or eroded the various barriers and partitions. The changed international situation, too, above all the new relation of world forces and the consolidation of the economic, political and military positions of the Soviet Union and other countries of the socialist community, began to exercise a

palpable influence on the situation within the working-class movement. In combination with the peace-loving policy of the socialist countries and their drive for peaceful co-existence, with their successive far-reaching peace initiatives, these changes were reflected in the general psychological climate within the working class and other segments of the working people and also among certain sections of Social Democrats.

A decisive role here was played by the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU in 1956. The theoretical conclusions drawn then with an eye to the Party's own experience and that of other Communist parties—that it is possible to avoid another world war and that cardinal importance attaches to peaceful coexistence in furthering the liberation struggle, that the passage to socialism occurs in a variety of forms, that in some countries the working class can win power without a civil war, that parliament can play a role in the fight for democracy and socialism, and that favourable conditions have arisen for the development of working-class unity—have all exercised a tremendous influence on the overall situation within the working-class movement and acted as a powerful stimulant for far-reaching changes.

The resolutions of the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU made a strong impact on the creative activity of Communist parties in capitalist countries, and prompted them to develop new strategic and tactical principles which greatly widened the ground for the unity of the working-class and democratic forces in the fight for peace and social progress.

This unity was furthered by the increasing resolve of the mass of the people to safeguard peace. Working people in capitalist countries came to realise more and more clearly that world-wide nuclear war was the sole alternative to peaceful coexistence. They came to realise that the concepts of "rolling back" or "containing" communism by armed force, by a devastating nuclear strike (allegedly without any extraordinary consequences for the life and welfare of capitalist countries), reposed upon a dangerous delusion that had nothing in common with reality. Opponents of the cold war and the arms race increased in number steeply in capitalist countries since the latter half of the 50s. The cold war and the arms race were now attacked not only by Communists but also by other influential forces—many of them ideologically and politically associated with Social Democracy, with reformist trade unions, and with scientific and public groups far removed from communism.

All this furthered within the working-class movement a tendency to renounce the cold war dogmas and the relations fostered by these dogmas between different political forces within the working-class and democratic movement. The very fact that the criticism was

centred chiefly against those who favoured continuing the cold war and the arms race, and that the arguments of this criticism were the same as those of the Communists, inevitably relieved relations between them of their former irreconcilable spirit, creating a basis for co-operation and joint action related to these most vital international issues, and certain other problems. That was how the growing opposition to the cold war policy, the rejection of this policy by the mass of the people, created favourable conditions for the drive for the unity and co-operation of all democratic and socialist forces.

But the existence of objective conditions for eliminating the split in the working-class movement did not mean that unity was merely a question of time. The obstacles to it were so great and so serious, and the objective so enormous and so complicated, that there was hardly any reason to count on easy and swift success. The depth of the rift between the Communist and Social Democratic parties, the starting positions they occupied, gave little ground for optimism. The leaderships of the Social Democratic parties in most capitalist countries had, in effect, identified themselves with official bourgeois policy and propaganda. As noted in the Statement of the 1960 Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, "some Right-wing Social-Democratic leaders have openly adopted imperialist views".¹

As a rule, the right-wing Social Democrats managed not only to follow such a line de facto, but also to impose it as the official posture and incorporate it in their parties' political and policy documents. The situation was made worse by the fact that the rightward evolution of the official Social Democratic posture and renunciation of the traditional socialist goals and ideas complicated the search for points of contact even on particular, relatively specific, issues. Co-operation on cardinal problems of the class struggle and the struggle for socialism was essentially impossible in the absence of profound and far-reaching changes in the social democratic movement. Yet the prevailing situation within most of the Social Democratic parties afforded hope that the changed world situation and the intensification of the class struggle in capitalist countries would affect the mood of the Social Democratic rank and file, would influence the activity of left-wing Social Democrats and trade unions, and thus gradually compel the Social Democratic leadership, including the right-wingers, to alter their posture. The history of the Social Democratic movement has shown conclusively enough that the stance of its leaders changed considerably depending on the mood of the rank and file, the acuteness of the class struggle and the relation of forces within the party. It has shown that the leaders were not as "free" in defining their position as they would have liked to be.

¹ *The Struggle for Peace, Democracy and Socialism*, Moscow, 1963, p. 71.

In many ways this was conditioned by the position won for themselves by the Communist parties of capitalist states during the war and in the post-war period. Their resolute struggle for the demands of the masses, for peace and social progress, elicited an ever more visible response among the working class and other segments of the working people, and this was something right-wing Social Democrats had to reckon with. The increasing popularity of the slogans for peace and disarmament and, conversely, the increasing unpopularity of the cold war, forced the Social Democratic leaders to manoeuvre, made them more pliable, and impelled a search for compromise.

In sum, therefore, the situation within the working-class and democratic movement as a whole, like the situation within the Social Democratic parties, prompted efforts for unity, for constructive cooperation in the interests of peace, democracy and socialism. What was needed was a sober evaluation of the available opportunities and of the grave obstacles to unity, and realistic long-term strategy and tactics, for a long persevering, hard struggle.

STRENGTHENING OF UNITARIAN TENDENCIES WITHIN THE WORKING-CLASS AND DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT

The new upswing of the working-class and democratic movement in some West European countries and Japan, and the several joint actions of the working people and their organisations during that upswing helped escalate the struggle for alliance of left forces at the level of mass organisations, trade unions, local and regional party organisations.

The growth of the anti-war movement that began in the latter half of the 50s was a highly important factor which influenced the climate within the working-class movement and especially in its grass-roots mass organisations. The battle for peace was gradually joined by ever broader segments of the working people. And many participants in mass nuclear disarmament movements that sprang up nearly everywhere at that time in the form of marches and processions, meetings and demonstrations, and civil disobedience and non-violent resistance campaigns, were members and followers of Social Democratic parties and reformist trade unions.¹ It became more and more difficult for Social Democratic leaders to prevent the mass of their members from participating in anti-war organisations and

¹ For example, see V. Y. Tsvetov, *The People of Japan Are Against US War Bases*, Moscow, 1960; V. D. Yezhov, *Class Battles on the Rhine*, Moscow, 1973, pp. 180-222; I. I. Zhigalov, *British Progressives Fight for Disarmament and Peace—1956-1964*, Moscow, 1965 (all in Russian); "Against 'Atomising' Norway", in *World Marxist Review*, No. 6, 1961, pp. 85-87.

movements. This broad participation of the Social Democratic rank and file in anti-war actions of the late 50s and early 60s also tended to blunt the anti-communist sentiment fanned by the right-wing leaders.

Most of the contacts and the co-operation that arose during that time between left-wing Socialists and the Communists in the struggle against the threat of nuclear war, for a stop to nuclear weapons tests and to the arms race, and for greater international co-operation, survived in the later period and stimulated fresh efforts in the same direction.

The coming together of various segments of the working class was stimulated still more directly by the mass democratic organisations that sprang up at the time to counter the authoritarian moves of the ruling classes (above all in France and Italy).¹ Their broad political aims called for cohesion and caused deep-going shifts in the political thinking of the masses. It was no accident, therefore, that a higher degree of unity was achieved in those countries where the democratic movements were larger and stronger, so that an enduring groundwork was laid for subsequent struggles against forces interested in sustaining and aggravating the split of the working class.

The upswing of the mass movement of the late 50s and early 60s, which exercised an immediate influence on the struggle for unity, saw contradictions pile up within Social Democratic parties and resulted in a visible strengthening of their left wing.² Especially significant in furthering co-operation between members of various political schools within the working-class movement were the processes witnessed in the mid-50s and later in the trade union movement of certain capitalist countries and, notably, in unions associated with Social Democratic parties. In some cases the unions were, indeed, far more radical than the Social Democratic or Socialist parties with which they were associated.

In the early 60s, for example, the West German trade union centre, Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund—DGB and its member unions, departed from the positions of the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) on a number of acute social and political issues. This was especially true of such large unions affiliated with the DGB as the metalworkers', chemical and printing workers' unions. In defiance of the posture of the SPD, the DGB and its member unions came out with sharp criticism of Bonn's "emergency" legislation, campaigned for outlawing the neofascist NPD, raised con-

¹ See K. G. Kholodkovsky, *The Workers' Movement in Italy—1959-1963*, Moscow, 1969; Y. I. Rubinsky, *The Fifth Republic—Political Struggle in France in 1958-1963*, Moscow, 1964 (both in Russian).

² For more details see Chapter 13 of this volume.

crete disarmament demands, and called for a relaxation of international tensions.

The political activity of another large West European trade union centre, the British Trades Union Congress, and its member unions followed a course all its own. At the end of the 50s and in the early 60s the unions shifted far to the left of the Labour Party leadership on some key political issues. In 1960, most of them opposed the attempts of Hugh Gaitskell and Co. to delete from the party's policy documents the point on nationalising the chief means of production, distribution and exchange. They also denounced the foreign and military policy of the Labour leaders of that time who espoused nuclear arms competition and close alignment with NATO. In the next several years, and especially when Harold Wilson became Labour leader, relations between the party leadership and the trade unions gradually returned to normal. Then, beginning in the spring of 1966 when the Labour government opposed the seamen's strike and thereupon introduced a wage freeze on the excuse of balance of payments difficulties,¹ the trade unions came out more and more sharply and resolutely against the Labour leaders' policy.²

In Italy, flouting the conciliatory and divisive policy of Italian Socialist Party leaders, part of the members and leaders of the Italian General Confederation of Labour associated with that party continued to follow a class policy and to work together with Communists. As a result, the general position of the Confederation, the largest trade union centre in the country, remained militant and aim-oriented. The strengthening of the mass struggle in Italy also affected the two other trade union centres influenced mainly by Christian Democrats and Social Democrats. This paved the way for concrete steps towards broad trade union unity at the end of the 60s.

In France, the new tendencies witnessed in the unions led to serious policy changes in the trade union centres connected with the Socialist Party and the Catholic movement. The French Confederation of Christian Workers (CFTC) influenced by the French episcopate and the Catholic MRP was renamed French Democratic Confederation of Labour (CFDT) in 1964, broke its ties with the church, and proclaimed itself secular and independent of any political parties and organisations. It took a more radical stand both on purely trade union issues and on political matters. This led to its visible convergence with the General Confederation of Labour (CGT) and to united action on concrete labour issues. From 1966 on, the centre began to co-ordinate its activity with the CGT officially. Its swing

¹ See F. E. Burdzhakov, *State-Monopoly Incomes Policy: Concepts and Practice (Based on British Data)*, Moscow, 1973, pp. 104-118 (in Russian).

² For more details see Chapter 9 of this volume.

to the left, we might add, saw its membership more than double in 1964-1970, climbing to a total of 850,000, whereas between 1960 and 1964 it had risen by a mere 50,000 (from 350,000 to 400,000).¹

Indicatively, the Force Ouvrière, which clung to its rightist conciliatory positions, failed to increase its influence during that period and, indeed, even to retain its previous positions.

The Japanese trade union centre, SOHYO, known for its political militancy, witnessed a further widening of the range of social-economic and political demands during the 60s.² Despite the continuing split of the working-class movement and the refusal of the Domei trade union federation, associated with the Democratic Socialist Party—Minshu-Shakaito, to co-operate, the massive actions of the working people compelled even Domei leaders to seek contacts with other trade union centres at times of intensive struggle. The weight of Communists in the SOHYO centre, predominantly influenced by the Socialists, increased.

The leftward shift of the trade union movement witnessed in capitalist countries in the 60s was by no means straightforward. In Sweden, Austria and Switzerland, where the working-class movement was relatively stagnant, practically no changes occurred in the trade unions.

But even in countries where leftward shifts were in evidence, the influence of right-wing reformist leaders was in most cases no more than weakened, and certainly not wiped out. The actions and positions of the left wing were often inconsistent and frequently affected by reformist concepts and illusions.

Despite the conflicting nature of the complicated processes witnessed in the trade unions, the main result was a steady increase of the social-political activity of the rank and file, whose political outlook became more radical, and a coming together of organisations of disparate political views.

In the specific social-political climate of the 60s, the above new features observed in the trade union movement had a contradictory effect on the relations between Social Democratic parties and trade unions. The first reaction of the right-wing Social Democrats to the leftward shift of the unions was to loosen their ideological, political and organisational ties with them. This dovetailed with the aim of the right-wing leaders to alter the general image of the Social Democratic parties and give them an "all-national" character.

In the latter half of the 60s, and especially later, it became clear, however, that the "estrangement" between the Social Democrats and the trade unions had begun to disastrously affect the former's in-

¹ See *Le Nouvel Observateur*, April 27, 1970, pp. 46-56.

² See P. P. Topekha, *The Working-Class Movement in Japan (1945-1971)*, Moscow, 1973, pp. 290-291 (in Russian).

fluence on the mass of the people. In the long run, they were prompted (not at once, of course, and not to the full extent) to seek closer ties with the trade union movement and, indeed, made some substantial concessions for this end. But in so doing, the right-wing leaders tried to tighten their control over the unions and to prevent them from going too far in their opposition to the existing system and the bourgeois state.

The shifts in the trade union movement, its greater political involvement and general radicalisation, had an immediate effect on the relationship between various political forces within the working-class movement as a whole. The declining influence of right-wing Social Democrats in the unions of some countries created far more favourable conditions for the Communists' efforts to overcome existing artificial barriers and to tighten trade union unity. As a result, the ban on Communists holding office in trade unions established at the height of the cold war (in Finland, Britain, Canada, and some other countries) was lifted in the 60s.

The general psychological climate in the unions changed considerably, too. The dedication and sense of purpose displayed by Communists, their resolve in fighting for the rights and interests of the working people in the setting of growing mass activity, helped the gradual, and in some cases even rapid, eradication of anti-communist prejudices created by bourgeois and right-wing reformist propaganda. The Communists' prestige in the unions rose visibly and, as a rule, led to greater political cohesion of the trade union movement. The most striking changes occurred where the unions had earlier been under the predominant influence of reformists. This was true, above all, of some unions in Britain, where greater numbers of Communists were elected to the leadership and as delegates to the annual TUC conferences. And though by the rules trade unions could not send Communists as delegates to the annual Labour Party conferences, the changes within the trade union movement and in the political platform of the trade unions exercised a benign influence on the resolutions of that top Labour forum, and stimulated the leftward shift witnessed at first in Labour's grass-roots organisations and then to some extent also in its central bodies.

In the late 60s, Communists saw their influence increase in a few other countries where Social Democrats had previously held all but monopoly control. In the Federal Republic of Germany, for example, where the Communist Party was outlawed at the time and functioned underground, it succeeded in visibly extending its positions in the working-class movement. The Ministry of the Interior announced, for one, that in the mid-60s at elections to production councils at industrial enterprises a large number of Communists came out on top. In factories with "classified" production (number-

ing 116), as many as 210 active Communists were elected to production councils, including 47 as chairmen or members of the council boards.¹ These successes enabled the West German Communists to lay greater emphasis on legal methods and considerably expand output of printed matter. Eight Communist newspapers with a total circulation of 130,000 were being put out openly in 1965, while the authorities estimated that the circulation of "all sorts of Communist and pro-Communist publications" totalled 7.5 million copies.²

The general Communist line of boosting activity within the Belgian General Federation of Labour and at factories and in primary union branches in the setting of a general leftward shift of the working-class movement enabled the Communist Party of Belgium to gain fresh influence among the working people. At some of the country's largest enterprises Communists were elected to top trade union offices.

At the end of the 60s Communists also gained some influence, though less conspicuous and chiefly at local level, in the Canadian, Swedish, Norwegian and Danish unions.

Despite the complexity and contradictory nature of the processes involved, the greater political role played by the unions in capitalist countries during the 60s, their leftward shift and the dedicated struggle of Communists as their members and leaders, saw trade union unity make visible headway and, to some extent, also labour unity in general. In contrast to the late 50s and early 60s when such unity was won mostly for relatively short periods and was related to some specific workers' action, from the mid-60s on unity became more stable in form and was in some cases organisationally consolidated.

The progress achieved in the latter half of the 60s went farther still. In a broader political sense, it strengthened the basis for securing co-operation among various segments of the working-class movement at all levels and, above all, at the level of political parties.

THE COMMUNIST PARTY IS THE DECISIVE FORCE IN THE FIGHT FOR THE POLITICAL UNITY OF THE WORKING CLASS

The international situation and the winds of change in the working-class and democratic movement were used by the Communists to intensify the mass struggle, tighten the unity of the working class, and consolidate its ranks. In the late 50s and early 60s, making the most of the unitary tendencies that were taking root in the working-class

¹ See V. D. Yezhov, *op. cit.*, p. 306.

² *Ibid.*

and democratic movement, Communists came forward with a large number of far-reaching initiatives and expressed their determination to work for the unity of all the main political forces of the working-class movement. Their proposals and initiatives were not only concrete and practical, but were also closely tied in with the further creative development of the Communist parties' strategy and tactics impelled by the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU.

The Declaration and Peace Manifesto issued by the Conference of Communist and Workers' Parties held in Moscow on November 16-19, 1957, and the Statement of the Moscow Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties in November 1960 contained answers to the basic questions of the times. They presented an integral concept of the struggle of the international working class in the new conditions created by the successful advancement of world socialism and the further exacerbation of capitalist contradictions. Many of the principles spelled out in these documents were of cardinal importance for the working-class and democratic movement in the advanced capitalist countries. This applied first of all to the firm conviction expressed in the Peace Manifesto that the peace forces can prevent war and to the call for unity of all peace champions. "War is not inevitable," the Communists of the world said for all to hear, "war can be prevented, peace can be preserved and made secure".¹

The Communists defined the fight for peace and against the aggressive imperialist forces as the prime strategic task of the workers' and liberation movements on which hinged the destiny and better future of mankind. The new definition of this strategic task, linked with the conclusion that war can be averted and peaceful coexistence attained, reposed on the many qualitative changes in the relation of world forces, as it were, and created new opportunities for expanding working-class alliances and intensifying the class struggle.

The Statement of the 1960 Meeting spelled out a programme for uniting the broadest possible mass of the people in the fight for peace, democracy and social progress. "The main blow in the present conditions," the Statement said, "is directed with growing force at the capitalist monopolies, which are chiefly responsible for the arms race and which constitute the bulwark of reaction and aggression, at the whole system of state-monopoly capitalism, which defends their interests".² Having thus defined the chief adversary, the Communist parties worked hard to rally not only the peasants but also the intelligentsia and the urban petty and middle bourgeoisie round the working class in fighting that adversary.

¹ *The Struggle for Peace, Democracy and Socialism*, p. 85.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 67-68.

With Lenin's idea that the forms of transition from capitalism to socialism may differ from country to country as the point of departure, the Communist parties emphasised that the working class and its vanguard prefer to carry out the socialist revolution by peaceful means. This idea had nothing in common with the opportunist and revisionist theory of capitalism spontaneously growing into socialism; it had nothing in common with reformism. As the Communists conceived it, the question of the peaceful or non-peaceful way of socialist revolution concerned nothing but its form, not its content or substance. The substance remained the same: passage of power from the bourgeoisie to the working class, and socialisation of the basic implements and means of production. The chief laws and regularities of socialist revolution, too, remained in force.

The peaceful way of transition to socialism does not mean, as revisionists would have it, that the class struggle dies away or loses its sharpness. Only vigorous action of the masses headed by the working class and its Marxist-Leninist vanguard can make victory secure and frustrate the resistance of the reactionaries, forcing them to surrender. Even developing along these relatively peaceful lines, revolution will consist of an unbroken succession of ferocious class battles in which the masses will impose their will on the bourgeoisie, seizing one position after another from the adversary until power is finally won, and repulsing all attempts at counter-revolutionary restoration.

In the peaceful drive for power, said the Statement of the 1960 International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, the working class can win a lasting majority in parliament and turn it from an instrument serving the class interests of the bourgeoisie into an instrument serving the working people. The significance of parliamentary democracy in the fight for socialism hinges on the long-standing tradition of parliamentarism and bourgeois democracy in many developed capitalist countries. But this way of revolution proposed by the Communist parties is not a parliamentary way. Overrating the role of parliamentary institutions in the fight for power and forgetting the decisive importance of the extra-parliamentary struggle would be a revisionist perversion. Any act of parliament is liable to become a mere scrap of paper unless it is backed by mass action.

The programmes of change whereby the Communist parties sought to win the support of the mass of the working people combined political with social and economic demands aimed at restricting the omnipotence of monopoly capital and thus widening and refurbishing democracy. Slogans calling for democratisation and renewal of democracy held a prominent place in them. This created new opportunities for united action by various currents of the working-

class movement. "Marxists," Maurice Thorez pointed out, "have always condemned as sectarian and absolutely wrong the idea that democratic demands tend to give rise to 'illusions' among the mass of the people. On the contrary, the fight for democracy, renounced and betrayed by the big bourgeoisie, gives prestige and strength to the proletariat and permits it to unite the majority of the nation, to rally the broadest possible masses."¹

Pride of place among the general democratic demands went to various aspects of peaceful foreign policy and the fight against the war threat—demands to outlaw the testing and manufacture of nuclear weapons, to dismantle military blocs and bases in foreign territory, to substantially reduce armed forces and armaments, and launch controlled universal disarmament.

To lighten the road to working-class unity and rally the broadest possible masses through their own experience to active struggle for socialism, the Communist parties often chose the proposals worked out by trade unions and other mass working-class organisations under grass-roots pressure as the basis of their concrete programme of anti-monopoly struggle. The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Germany, for example, pointed out that some of the concrete proposals advanced by trade unions could be used to great advantage, and added that Communists saw these proposals and resolutions as a "good basis for joint action by all currents of the working-class movement" and by those democratic forces outside it that strive for the peaceful and democratic alternative and were willing "to join hands to carry through a new policy in the Federal Republic".²

Acting on the fundamental principles of proletarian internationalism and the forms and methods of tightening unity tested in preceding decades, the Communist parties, the international communist movement as a whole, were shaping an approach that took account of the specific features of the changed world situation and, simultaneously, the specific national distinctions. Its main feature was a close, organic linkage of the struggle for national and for international co-operation among the various political forces of the working class. The considerably strengthened positions of the Communist movement, coupled with the strength and prestige of the socialist community (the movement's clear asset), provided a new, more enduring and dependable foundation for that sort of linkage. The role of the Communist and Workers' parties of the socialist

¹ Maurice Thorez, "L'Union des forces ouvrières et républicaines pour la restauration et la rénovation de la démocratie", *Supplement to l'Humanité*, No. 4607, June 26, 1959, p. 42.

² *The Communist Party of Germany, 1945-1965*, Moscow, 1968, pp. 227, 228 (in Russian).

community countries increased accordingly. With the Social Democratic parties consolidating their positions in a number of Western countries and with many of them becoming ruling parties (which objectively reflected the grown political influence of the working class), this in principle laid the ground for dialogue between Communists and Social Democrats both at party and at governmental level.

The communist movement applied itself to a search for points of contact with the Social Democrats at international level. This, indeed, was organically part of the struggle to mend the split between Communists and Socialists at national level. The main objective here was to secure social and political progress inside the countries concerned and to defeat the forces of political reaction, militarism and war on the international scale.

Another distinctive feature of this approach was the dialectical combination of long-term guidelines aimed at securing political unity of the working-class movement in the interests of the struggle for peace, democracy and social progress, on the one hand, and search for co-operation in purely concrete national and international matters. And seeing how deep the split was, seeing the reformist transformation of the social-democratic movement and its ideological and political tendencies of that period as well as the relative weakness of its left wing, the Communists laid the main emphasis on attaining limited co-operation on the more acute issues that brooked no delay. "The vital interests of the working-class movement," said the Statement of the 1960 International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, "demand that Communist and Social-Democratic parties take joint action on a national and international scale to bring about the immediate prohibition of the manufacture, testing and use of nuclear weapons, the establishment of atom-free zones, general and complete disarmament under international control, the abolition of military bases on foreign soil and the withdrawal of foreign troops, to assist the national-liberation movement of the peoples of colonial and dependent countries, to safeguard national sovereignty, promote democracy and resist the fascist menace, improve the living standards of the working people, secure a shorter working week without wage cuts, etc. Millions of Social-Democrats and some Social-Democratic parties have already in some form or another come out in favour of solving these problems."¹

The Meeting also stressed the readiness of Communist parties to work in their countries together with Socialists on a broad range of issues, including the struggle for socialism: "Both in the struggle for the improvement of the living conditions of working people, the

¹ *The Struggle for Peace, Democracy and Socialism*, p. 72.

extension and preservation of their democratic rights, the achievement and defence of national independence, for peace among nations, and also in the struggle to win power and build socialism, the Communist parties advocate co-operation with the Socialist Parties."¹ In calling for co-operation with the Social Democratic movement, the Communist parties held that the latter's ties with various bourgeois parties, with the bourgeoisie as a whole, witnessed nearly everywhere in the pre-war and post-war periods, were not fatally inevitable and would not necessarily prevail always, in all circumstances; above all, they held, they were a result of the relation of forces internally and internationally unfavourable for the working class. Past experience showed that wherever this relation of forces changed in favour of the working class, if only for a short time (provided the Communist parties were up to the mark—flexible and realistic in their attitude), premises for effective co-operation between Social Democratic and Communist parties appeared instantly. On a more narrow scale this rule was working in practically all capitalist countries: any in the least prominent invigoration of the working-class movement led at once to closer links between Communists and Socialists at local and, partly, regional level.

One of the key tasks faced the Communist parties in this respect was to gradually overcome the anti-communist prejudices that had piled up among Social Democratic parties and organisations since the cold war. Hence the emphasis laid by the Communist parties on discussions, on long and patient dialogue with Social Democratic parties and their leaderships.²

In their dialogue with Social Democrats, Communists sought to explain the points of their programme and policy documents concerning new opportunities for peaceful passage to socialism, and the role of deep-going democratic changes as a necessary transitional phase towards socialist changes. It was important to convince the Social Democratic leaders and rank-and-file that these new principles were no tactical manoeuvre aimed at gaining here-and-now political goals, but a logical effect of the new world situation, the new situation in capitalist countries, and the new, far more extensive opportunities won by the working class in the fight for socialist transformations. It was no less important, too, to convince the Social Democratic parties that unity as conceived by Communists did not mean any gradual "absorption" of Social Democratic parties nor any shift of Communist parties to Social Democratic positions. The existence of common aims, Communists stressed, did not mean there was complete identity of views among Social Democrats

¹ Ibid., pp. 72-73.

² Ibid.

and Communists, still, it served as a tangible basis for joint struggle.

But dialogue with Social Democrats was not confined to mere elucidation of the positions of Communist parties, to exposure of anti-communist myths and prejudices. Faithful to their consistent class-centred positions and to their common principles of struggle for unity, Communists sharply criticised the conciliatory tactics of the Social Democratic leadership, its inclination to class co-operation, its unscrupulous political manoeuvres and inconsistency in furthering the rights and interests of the working people. In other words, they criticised everything that was either a direct act or immediate effect of the policy of alliance with the bourgeoisie and with bourgeois parties, and constituted the chief obstacle to the political unity of the working class. That is why, comradely discussion did not obviate but presupposed struggle against the anti-communist and reformist positions of the right-wing Social Democrats.

An important element of the approach worked out by the Communists was that it envisaged contacts and co-operation with Social Democrats at all levels, from grassroot branches to top bodies of leadership. The Communist parties held that omission of any of these conditions would, as past experience had shown, only complicate the struggle for unity and co-operation and hold down positive developments among the Social Democratic rank-and-file and its leadership.

Already in the mid-50s the Communist parties began breaking down the ice that had accumulated in their relations with Social Democrats during the cold war period. The party congresses held at that time did not confine themselves to just proclaiming the general line of eliminating the split in the working-class movement, and took concrete steps towards that goal.

The Fourteenth Congress of the French Communist Party (1956), for example, declared the mission of securing working-class unity as "immediate and most important".¹ At that congress, and also at the next one, the Fifteenth, which took place in 1959, the French Communists specified their tasks in the fight for a single front of all working-class and democratic forces—which they regarded as essential for success in the drive for genuine democracy in their country and for peace and socialism.

The Communist Party of Japan, too, devoted itself to the problem of working-class unity. Criticising the inconsistency of the Socialist Party's leadership on some issues, the Communists stressed the many common points in the platform and policy of the two parties and said it was possible and desirable for them to co-operate both

¹ *Cahiers du communisme*, July-August 1956, p. 383.

in the struggle for the vital interests of the people and "in the stage of the democratic revolution in Japan ... as well as in the stage of building socialism".¹ The Communist Party participated actively in joint actions against the Japanese-American "security treaty" and for the removal of US bases from Japanese soil.

The Communist parties did not reduce the concept of working-class unity to co-operation between Communists and Socialists. In countries where Christian, notably Catholic, organisations enjoyed much influence among the workers, the Communists also sought to win the left or "social" wing of these organisations for joint action. At the Eighth Congress of the Italian Communist Party (1956), for example, its General Secretary Palmiro Togliatti said in his report that search for the most effective ways of progress to socialism "must necessarily provide for political alliance with those Catholic forces which would from vague anti-capitalist spirit gather determination to do everything for the capitalist system in Italy to undergo indispensable profound transformations".²

The task of securing alliance with working Catholics held a prominent place among the guidelines for "a programme of peace and progress, and for an anti-monopoly government" approved by the Communist Party of Belgium at its Thirteenth Congress (1960). At that time much attention was devoted to the same problem by the Communist parties of Spain and Portugal.

Concrete programmes and proposals for uniting the left forces were put forward in the latter half of the 50s and the early 60s by the Communist parties of Finland, Great Britain, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Canada, the FRG, and other capitalist countries.

The Communists of France achieved considerable headway in overcoming the split among the political forces of the working-class movement. Especially important here was the nomination of a common left candidate, François Mitterrand, in the presidential elections of 1965. The election results confirmed the vitality of the ideas of unity and workers' solidarity.

A new step in overcoming the split of the left in France was the agreement between the French Communist Party and the Federation of the Democratic and Socialist Left (including SFIO) concluded on December 20, 1966, which considerably extended the range of joint action. Apart from accords on actions against the authoritarian regime, it contained some more general economic, social and political programme demands, and also demands in support of peaceful coexistence and peace.

¹ *The Eighth Congress of the Communist Party of Japan (Tokyo, July 25-31, 1961)*, Moscow, 1961, p. 143 (in Russian).

² *Partito comunista d'Italia. Congresso 8*, Roma 1956, p. 66.

This document, however, which was purely provisional and failed to address many fundamental issues, was not the chief achievement of the French left in the latter half of the 60s. The main thing was a visible invigoration of the unitary, socialist forces in the working-class movement, in its organisations, and the growing determination to secure unity.

Good results in overcoming the split of the working-class movement were achieved in Finland. The acute internal struggle that erupted in the Social Democratic Party in the early half of the 60s weakened the positions of the extreme right, anti-communist, wing in the Party and its leadership. By the mid-60s many Social Democrats, including some in the top Party leadership, came out more and more insistently for co-operation with Communists. The strengthening of these forces inside the Party, as already noted, furthered co-operation between Social Democrats and Communists in trade unions and in the peace movement. The Communist Party of Finland, too, worked with still greater resolve for closer ties with Social Democrats. In a discussion held in 1965, the two parties came to the conclusion that co-operation was desirable not only at local and parliamentary levels, but also in the government. As a result of their accord and the 1966 electoral success of the working-class parties for which it had largely paved the way, a coalition government was formed which included Social Democrats and Communists.¹

In furthering co-operation with Social Democrats, the Finnish Communists held that "co-operation between the two parties would also help to achieve unity between the old, traditional sections of the working class and the new, rapidly growing strata of clerical workers, officials and the technical intelligentsia (to the extent that these categories belong to the working class)".² The visible shift to the left seen among the new sections of the working class, which had considerably stimulated the leftward shift of the Social Democratic Party, also created more favourable conditions for the Communist Party's drive for greater influence among them, furthered as well by the growth of trade union influence among the new sections of the working class.³

Despite the serious difficulties created by the leaders of the Italian Socialist Party when they scrapped the pact for united action with Communists, with the Party veering to the right, certain success towards working-class unity and unity of all left and democrat-

¹ Aarne Saarinen, "Communists in Government", *World Marxist Review*, No. 4, 1971, pp. 15-17.

² *World Marxist Review*, No. 3, 1969, p. 30.

³ *Ibid.*

ic forces was also achieved in Italy. The Communists and other left forces succeeded in maintaining and consolidating co-operation between followers of workers' parties in the unions, as was already pointed out earlier, and, indeed, in some cases also in securing united action at political level. In many municipalities, for example, Communists and Socialists worked jointly, forming a left majority. An analogous situation arose at local level during various democratic mass campaigns organised in response to internal and international problems. This means that the plans of the right-wing Socialist Party leadership, centred on splitting the working-class movement, succeeded only at the upper, and partly the middle, political level. The surviving allegiance of the bulk of members of the Socialist Party to the traditional policy of working-class unity came into sharp conflict with their loyalty to the Party's upper echelon, and conditioned the extreme instability of the political combinations which the Party leaders of that time sought to secure. At the same time, it strengthened the positions of the Party's left wing, which insisted on a return to clear-cut class positions and on appropriate changes in the policy of alliances.

An important element in the joint actions of the Italian working people and of their organisations in the latter half of the 60s was the co-operation and mutual support that evolved between the Communist Party and the Italian Socialist Party of Proletarian Unity. Despite its relatively small membership, the latter took an important place in the ideological and political struggle that unfolded in the country at that time.¹ Its consistently socialist policy was an important factor complicating the divisive actions of the Socialist Party and Social Democratic Party rightist leaderships, and helped radicalise the mass movement.

The importance of securing alliance with working Catholics as part of the wider task of securing popular unity stimulated the special attention which Communist parties in Catholic countries, notably Italy, Spain and Portugal, devoted to this objective. The magnitude of the anti-fascist, democratic tasks in such countries as Spain and Portugal prompted the Communist parties there to devote the maximum attention to all signs of disaffection with the regime wherever they might have occurred—in the Church, the army, among the officialdom, and even within the dominant class. In their documents and practical policy, the Communist parties did not forget for a moment that the working class, its unity, good organisation, and political awareness were the main force in the struggle for deep-going democratic change. This, among other things, made the Spanish Com-

¹ See K. G. Kholodkovsky, *op. cit.*, pp. 364-366.

munists attach so much significance to expanding and invigorating the role of the Workers' Commissions which became the main centres of resistance to Francoist social-economic policies in the latter half of the 50s.¹

The special conditions of the struggle in countries where Communist parties had not yet acquired sufficient mass support, prompted Communists to lay the emphasis on the maximum advance to unity in relatively narrow areas of the struggle—where it was acute enough and where Communist influence was the greatest. The magnitude of the influence of right-wing Social Democrats in those countries made the ideological and political struggle against them and simultaneous emphasis on co-operation with other left forces highly important. "As Communists," we read in the Programme of the Communist Party of Great Britain, "we sincerely desire the strengthening of the left trends within the Labour Party. We believe that the struggle of the socialist forces to make it a party of action and socialism will grow, and that the growth of the Communist Party will help this development."²

The direct link between the fight for working-class unity and the fight for greater Communist influence was also pinpointed by other Communist parties. In an article on the results of the Twentieth Convention of the Communist Party of Canada, which took a critical view of the past experience of struggle for unity, its General Secretary William Kashtan wrote that "the strengthening of the Party and its independent work is therefore a decisive factor in bringing about such unity and co-operation."³

The considerable growth of working-class militancy in capitalist countries in the late 60s set the Communist parties a number of new tasks, and this also in the struggle for united action by the basic currents within the working-class movement.

In the 60s, the Communist parties considerably stepped up their political activity on the international scene. The Conference of the European Communist and Workers' Parties on European Security, held in Karlovy Vary (Czechoslovakia) in 1967, made a big contribution to the struggle for European peace and security. Its statement, "For Peace and Security in Europe", contained a deep-going analysis of the prevailing international situation and a programme for winding up the system of blocs and replacing it with a collective security system based on the principles of the peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems. The Conference also adopted

¹ See Chapter 9 of this volume.

² *The British Road to Socialism. Communist Party Programme*, London, 1968, p. 24.

³ *World Marxist Review*, No. 7, 1969, p. 41.

statements condemning the US aggression in Vietnam and the military coup in Greece of April 21, 1967.¹

The International Meeting of Communists held in Moscow in June 1969 produced an exhaustive analysis of the deepening of the general crisis of capitalism and the development of the class struggle witnessed during that period. It took note of the invigoration of the struggle of the working class, the broad mass of the working people, not only for improving their economic situation but also for social and political demands. The fact that these demands were being more and more directly aimed against the system of monopoly capital, against its political rule, was singled out as a fundamentally new feature of the class battles.

The new level of the class struggle, the greater acuteness of social and political crises in capitalist countries, called for special accuracy in defining the aims and prospects of the anti-monopoly movement and its link with the struggle for socialism. Elaborating upon the existing strategy of anti-monopoly struggle, the 1969 Meeting produced a clear definition of the Communist standpoint on this issue. The aims at this stage of the struggle, its document said, consisted in "decisively limiting the role played by the monopolies in the economies of the countries concerned, of putting an end to the power of big capital and of bringing about such radical political and economic changes as would ensure the most favourable conditions for continuing the struggle for socialism."² The Meeting stressed emphatically that the struggle for democracy, for anti-monopoly transformations, was an inalienable part of the struggle for socialism.

The greater activity of mass democratic movements, which reflected growing opposition sentiments among socially, ideologically and politically disparate groups and segments of capitalist society, made it essential for the Communists to further elaborate and make more specific their approach to forming anti-monopoly alliances, and to determine the allies of the revolutionary working-class movement in the anti-monopoly struggle. The 1969 Meeting, which again stressed the importance of the alliance between workers and peasants, of the workers' joint action with urban middle strata, also singled out the specific problem of the social and political role of the intelligentsia. Relying on its Marxist-Leninist analysis of the changed objective condition and the ideological and political standpoint of the mass of the intelligentsia, the Meeting drew the important con-

¹ "Conference of European Communist and Workers' Parties in Karlovy Vary 'For Peace and Security in Europe'", in *World Marxist Review*, No. 6, 1967; *Information Bulletin*, Nos. 9-10, 1967, p. 106.

² *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow, 1969*, Prague, 1969, p. 27.

clusion that the alliance of workers by brain and by hand was becoming an ever greater force in the struggle for peace, democracy and social progress.

During this period, Communists devoted especially great attention to such typical phenomena of the 60s as the vigorous political activity of the youth, the mighty upswing of the student movement, the greater role of women in production and society, and also in the class struggle, and the growth of anti-monopoly and anti-imperialist sentiments among the Catholic masses and other believers.

By virtue of the new opportunities for advancing the anti-monopoly struggle created by the more intensive political involvement of the working class and other working people, and by reason of the differentiation that was shaping within reformist organisations, the Communists set themselves the task of forming a political alliance with all democratic currents in the course of united anti-monopoly and anti-imperialist actions, with the working class acting as its main force. The idea of an anti-monopoly coalition thus gained concrete political expression. This democratic alliance was called upon to carry out anti-monopoly changes. Its victory, the 1969 Meeting stressed, could be achieved only through the struggle of the masses themselves. "While making use of all possibilities of parliamentary activity," it said, "Communists emphasise that the mass movement of the working class and of all working people is the decisive factor in the struggle for democracy and socialism."¹

Acting on the resolutions of their national and international forums, the Communist parties in advanced capitalist countries applied the maximum effort to use the new possibilities for furthering working-class and democratic unity that arose by virtue of the sharp invigoration of the mass movement. Continuing the struggle for united action in the trade unions, they also intensified their actions in the democratic movement, above all the peace movement, the movement against racial discrimination, against the authoritarianism of the ruling circles, against the neo-nazi and fascist danger, and in the student and youth movement.

The fact that left Social Democrats and Socialists, and not only of the rank and file, took a conspicuous part in all these democratic movements helped tighten the ties and co-operation between them and the Communists. At the end of the 50s such contacts had been infrequent: by the mid-60s they became commonplace in many countries. The most typical examples are the regular contributions by left Labour MPs and trade union leaders to the *Morning Star*, the British Communist newspaper, and the more frequent contacts between Communist and Left Social Democratic members of parliament in

¹ Ibid.

Sweden, Norway, and some other countries. Even in the Federal Republic of Germany where the Communist Party was still outlawed, active participation of Communists in working-class and democratic movements, and their skilled combination of underground and legal activity, helped the left and other progressive forces in the country to gradually shake off anti-communist prejudices. There were more discussions in which Communists publicly presented their views on topical political issues and questions of Marxist theory.¹

The obstacles raised by right-wing Social Democratic leaders and other foes to working-class unity to constructive co-operation by the political forces of the working-class movement, and the ununiform and conflicting nature of the social and political development of various capitalist countries, however, prevented the Communist parties in most of these countries from securing decisive progress in uniting the democratic and socialist forces in the 60s. But the dedicated struggle, the colossal exertions to achieve this, were not wasted. Its chief outcome was that practically everywhere, in some cases to a greater and in others to a lesser extent, Communist parties gave the start to a convergence of different segments of the working class and thus created a tangible basis for further progress towards working-class unity with all other anti-monopoly democratic forces.

VITAL ISSUES OF WORLD POLITICS AND THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT

The persevering struggle of the Communist parties, of the international Communist movement, coupled with the ever more powerful impulses of the mass movement, saw welcome changes in the attitude of some Social Democratic parties towards co-operation with Communists already in the early 60s. Yet nearly throughout the 60s, the general ideological and political positions of the Social Democrats and their main centre, the Socialist International, remained practically the same, and acted as a brake on the positive processes that had begun to appear in the working-class and democratic movement. Their positions were especially unfavourable to progress on issues that required broad international co-operation between Communists and Social Democrats, that is, above all the struggle to remove the war threat, to curb the arms race, and to relieve international tensions. Yet the attitude of Social Democrats to these issues was of no small importance. Suffice it to say that by the beginning of the 70s parties affiliated with the Socialist International

¹ See V. D. Yezhov, *op. cit.*, p. 306.

had a membership of more than 14 million and that those voting for them totalled nearly 75 million.¹ These largely untapped reserves could have exercised a tremendous influence on the outcome of the struggle for detente.

Hence the importance of the new trends that surfaced in the international Social Democratic movement at the end of the 60s and in the early 70s and which, in the long run, greatly modified its overall approach to world problems and its position on a number of concrete international issues.

The changes in the position of Social Democrats on international issues were stimulated above all by changes in the international situation, the discreditation of imperialism's aggressive policy in Vietnam and other countries and regions, and the rising prestige of the policy of peace and peaceful co-existence consistently followed by the Soviet Union and the other socialist community countries. But no small part was also played by internal processes within Social Democratic parties.²

In the concrete situation of the late 60s and early 70s the re-orientation of the Social Democratic movement in foreign policy was greatly furthered by those of its detachments which showed ever greater independence in defining their foreign policy. The first to do so in the 60s were the Finnish and Swedish Social Democrats, and the Japanese Socialists. In the early 70s, an important part in improving the international climate was played by the Social Democratic Party of Germany, which drew up a constructive foreign-policy programme renouncing the revenge-seeking line aimed at revising the results of World War II, and setting the sights on normalising relations with the Soviet Union, the GDR, Czechoslovakia and Poland. It became an important instrument in consolidating the Party's position on the political scene, enabling it to best the CDU/CSU and to consolidate itself as the leading party in the government coalition. Under the impact of its new foreign-policy concept which had yielded such swift political dividends, progressive tendencies also gained vigour in other Social Democratic parties.

At its Twelfth Congress (Vienna, June 1972), the Socialist International voiced approval of the Eastern policy of the Social Democratic Party of Germany. The Congress showed that certain positive changes were coming about with respect to the crucial issue of contacts and co-operation between Social Democrats and Communists.

¹ *Socialist Affairs*, Nos. 6-7, 1972, p. 113. In 1979 the Socialist International encompassed 68 parties and organisations with a membership of nearly 15 million. The number of electors who cast their ballots for parties affiliated with the Socialist International totalled something like 80 million (see *Socialist Affairs*, No. 5, 1972, p. 158).

² For more details see Chapter 13 of this volume.

Already in the winter of 1970, disparate positions on this issue had surfaced at a Socialist International seminar in Austria.¹ Spokesmen of some parties (like those of Finland and Italy), held that dialogue and co-operation with Communists was essential, while those of others (the Italian Social Democratic and the Israel Labour parties) categorically objected to any and all contacts. A compromise was advanced by the representatives of the Social Democratic Party of Germany who favoured limiting contacts "to the minimally necessary level". The further development of events on the international scene and far-reaching changes in the policy of a number of Social Reformist parties strengthened the positions of those who favoured achieving mutual understanding with Communists. Considerable importance here attached to the founding of the Socialist Party of France in place of SFIO, its bankrupt predecessor, for the new party based its strategy of winning power on co-operation with the French Communist Party. As a result, the Socialist International had no choice but to grant its member parties the right to establish bilateral ties with other parties (meaning above all Communists) as they saw fit, provided they made no ideological concessions.

The realistic tendencies in the policy of the international Social Democratic movement made some further headway at later forums. In 1972-1974 congresses and conferences of Social Democratic and Socialist parties supported the principles of peaceful co-existence, acknowledged the universal importance of the Soviet-American agreement on preventing nuclear war, stressed the need for political, economic, scientific, technical and cultural co-operation with socialist countries on a basis of equality and mutual advantage, and expressed themselves in favour of simultaneous dissolution of NATO and the Warsaw Treaty Organisation, and of reducing armed forces and armaments in Central Europe. They also announced their refusal to assist fascist and reactionary regimes.

In its election documents, the British Labour Party declared for removing US submarine bases with Polaris missiles from the country's territory, for reducing military expenditures to the level of those of Britain's allies in Europe, for a phased dissolution of the system of blocs on the European continent, for European co-operation, and for all-round relations with socialist countries. In February 1975, soon after coming to power, the Labour government signed a series of documents and agreements aimed at expanding co-operation with the Soviet Union and, later, with other socialist countries.

Positive foreign-policy actions were also taken by other Social Democratic and Socialist parties, such as the Scandinavian ones,

¹ See *Socialist Affairs*, No. 2, 1971, p. 46.

the Austrian, French and Belgian. On the whole, the Social Democratic movement contributed to detente and the furtherance of the principles of peaceful co-existence. It was constructive in its attitude to the idea of convening a European security conference, and followed a realistic course during the work of that conference, emphasising its wish that the provisions of the Final Act signed in Helsinki should be carried out phase by phase. Some Social Democratic parties took part in anti-war actions, notably against the US imperialist aggression in Vietnam, and in the campaign of solidarity with the victims of fascist terrorism in Chile. They also took a constructive stand in a number of cases that concerned settlement of the Middle East problem. All of them declared themselves in favour of supplementing political with military detente, though this was not always embodied in the concrete policy of governments headed by Social Democrats.

The positive tendencies in the foreign policy of some Social Democratic parties made it doubly necessary for the international Social Democratic movement to work out common positions on a wide range of political problems related, first of all, to the processes of detente. The weak sides of the Social Democrats' policy in this field, largely due to the absence of their own comprehensive concept of disarmament, were especially obvious against the background of the Berlin Conference of Communist and Workers' Parties (1976) whose participants advanced a broad and concrete platform of struggle for detente, disarmament, and greater security in Europe. The Thirteenth Congress of the Socialist International which gathered soon after it (Geneva, November 1976) raised the question of "aligning the positions" of the Social Democratic movement on security and co-operation. Consolidating the positive elements in Social Democratic foreign policy, the Congress came out for consolidating and extending detente. For the first time in the history of the Socialist International, no propaganda statements about a "Soviet threat" resounded at its congress. The Social Democratic parties commended the results of the Conference on European Security and Co-operation and re-affirmed their determination to carry forward the provisions of its Final Act.¹ The Congress stressed the need for effective disarmament measures: non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, prohibiting nuclear weapons tests, setting up nuclear-free zones, outlawing biological and chemical weapons, concluding a Soviet-American agreement on the second stage of strategic arms limitation, and so on. Universal disarmament was proclaimed the final goal.

At the same time, the Socialist International in effect evaded a

¹ *Socialist Affairs*, No. 1, 1977, p. 21.

discussion of co-operation with Communists in the struggle for detente, and exaggerated the role of Social Democracy in improving international relations. Also witnessed at the Congress was a tendency of using detente to divide the Communist movement. The disarmament demands raised at the Congress were general and declarative in nature.¹

At the same time, the question of international detente held a stable and prominent place in the policy of the Social Democrats. The Amsterdam Conference of the leaders of Social Democratic and Socialist parties held in April 1977 noted in its public statement that in current conditions there was no realistic alternative to detente, which was the only way of averting disaster and securing lasting peace.² In October 1977 in Madrid participants in a meeting of the Socialist International Bureau acknowledged the need for complementing political with military detente. And at a meeting of Social Democratic leaders in Tokyo in December 1977 the central issue was that of nuclear non-proliferation.

The more vigorous promotion of detente by the Social Democratic movement helped in no small measure to mount the drive against neutron bombs, which involved all peace-loving forces and saw broad masses of Social Democrats taking part.

In the setting of a mounting struggle against the development of new types of mass destruction weapons, the Socialist International convened a conference on disarmament in Helsinki in April 1978. It was its first special conference with that sort of agenda. Protests resounded from its rostrum against the plans of manufacturing neutron bombs; it demanded a total ban on chemical and biological weapons, and denounced those Western circles which encouraged and promoted militarism in the developing countries. Calls resounded for concrete action promoting disarmament. Its participants stressed the importance of an early conclusion of the Soviet-American negotiations on strategic arms limitation, and of tangible progress at the Vienna negotiations. Willy Brandt, who summed up its results, acknowledged the realities that had emerged in the international relation of forces and declared that "no tangible results can be expected in the matter of disarmament without the Soviet Union."³

The participation of a CPSU delegation led by B. Ponomarev, Politbureau Alternate Member and Secretary of the CC CPSU,

¹ For more details about the Socialist International's Thirteenth Congress see A. B. Weber, "Dilemmas Facing Social Democrats", in *Rabochy klass i sovremennyy mir*, No. 2, 1977, pp. 45-48.

² For more details see G. Sogomonian, "Buttressing Peace and the Social Democrats", in *Kommunist*, No. 5, 1979, p. 99.

³ *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, April 27, 1978.

in that Conference helped to advance joint action by Communists and Social Democrats in the fight for disarmament. The head of the Soviet delegation presented the Soviet concept of detente and disarmament, and stressed in his speech that "in questions of the fight for disarmament, Communists and Social Democrats have of late formulated positions that are very close to each other".¹ Expressing hope that co-operation between Communist and Social Democratic parties in furthering political and military detente would grow stronger, the head of the Soviet delegation assured the participants in the Conference that the Soviet Union, which consistently followed a stable, peace-loving Leninist course, was prepared in future as well "to make all necessary efforts for questions of military detente to be at last tackled in a practical context in the interests of achieving real disarmament".²

The Conference in Helsinki showed that a sense of responsibility for disarmament was taking shape in the Social Democratic movement. Although, as was officially announced at the opening of the Conference, it did not aim at working out joint recommendations concerning disarmament and envisaged nothing but a free exchange of opinions on some aspects of the topic, some of the delegates formulated the demand to "join the efforts" of the Socialist parties and create a "co-ordinated and coherent common plan" of concrete action for detente.³ In accordance with various proposals, the Conference resolved to form a group of experts to work out a "comprehensive concept of disarmament".

The development of positive tendencies in the international policy of the Social Democratic movement was re-affirmed at the Fourteenth Congress of the Socialist International which gathered in Vancouver in November 1978. The topic of struggle for peace predominated at that Congress. Making a policy speech, Willy Brandt expressed grave alarm over the "disturbing delays" in the detente process, and condemned attempts to artificially retard its development as a threat of returning to the "period of confrontation". The calls for effective measures against the arms race and for appropriate "military agreements" to back up results already achieved, for promoting the early conclusion of strategic arms limitation agreements, showed that Social Democrats were aware of the importance of creating necessary premises for maintaining and advancing detente.⁴ Important here was the thesis formulated by Willy Brandt that "the political decision on the development of qualitatively new

¹ *Pravda*, April 26, 1978.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Neue Züricher Zeitung*, April 27, 1978.

⁴ For more details see A. B. Weber, "In Face of Complex Problems", in *New Times*, No. 49, 1978, pp. 13-15.

weapons in not automatically bound to result in their construction".¹ Also noteworthy is the fact that Brandt mentioned the "direct contacts" established by certain parties of the Socialist International "with politically responsible forces" of the Soviet Union and of East European countries as an element in the Social Democratic effort to consolidate detente. Bernt Carlsson, Secretary-General of the Socialist International, also touched on this topic. Though he said that the proposal made by the Soviet representative at the Conference in Helsinki to set up a mechanism for continuous joint action by Social Democrats and Communists in the field of disarmament was "controversial" from the point of view of the Socialist International, he spoke out in favour of a serious discussion of this idea. "The time is passed when such proposals would be treated just by silence," he said.²

The course of events after the Fourteenth Congress of the Socialist International showed that the international Social Democratic movement was keeping the topic of peace and disarmament firmly in its field of vision. Among other things, it predominated in the agenda of the Socialist International's study group on disarmament during its assembly in Helsinki in April 1979. It was also discussed at a conference of Socialist International leaders in Mexico (April 1979) and at the July 1979 meetings in Sweden of leaders of parties affiliated with the Socialist International. In a resolution on disarmament adopted by the Socialist International Bureau in Portugal (November 1979) an appeal to "interested governments to launch negotiations on controlled reduction of Eurostrategic military systems" was backed up with a call to avoid steps that might heighten tensions and complicate future negotiations.³ The need to continue the policy of detente and the struggle for European security was also stressed at a Socialist International Conference in Vienna (February 1980). Willy Brandt, Chairman of the Socialist International, who delivered the main report, noted specially that in the present conditions there was no alternative to the policy of detente.⁴

The cause of peace, detente and arms reduction was also reflected in the work of the Fifteenth Congress of the Socialist International, held in Madrid in November 1980 in a setting of international complications created by imperialist quarters. Despite pronouncements that cast doubt on the Soviet Union's sincerity in wanting peace and disarmament, many delegates laid the emphasis on positive tasks that would help relieve international tensions and start disarmament.

¹ *Socialist Affairs*, No. 1, 1979, p. 7.

² *Socialist International Congress, 14th. November 3-5, 1978. Report by Bernt Carlsson*, Vancouver, 1978, p. 3.

³ *Pravda*, December 11, 1979.

⁴ *Vorwärts*, February 14, 1980, p. 11.

The Congress resolution on military detente noted that disarmament was a matter of cardinal importance, and called for multilateral disarmament negotiations. Denunciations of the dangerous US plans of building up new types of nuclear weapons and of the American concept of "limited nuclear war" resounded at that Social Democratic forum. Delegates to the Fifteenth Congress called for the ratification of the SALT-2 treaty and urged the newly-elected US President, Ronald Reagan, to make resumption of strategic arms limitation negotiations with the Soviet Union the central objective of his administration.

On the whole, the Fifteenth Congress of the Socialist International reflected disparate and intricate processes under way in the Social Democratic movement. It was clear that Social Democrats considered furtherance of detente a permanent mission. Their proposals related to crucial problems of international relations were more constructive and more concrete than those of many bourgeois parties. It would be wrong, however, to overrate their role in the detente process and in the drive for peaceful co-existence. The contribution that the Social Democratic movement has made—though it lays claim to a major part in the resolution of international problems—it still a far cry from the requirements of the present moment.

The degree to which Social Democrats participate in the furtherance of detente depends on the measure to which the constructive elements in the approach of the Socialist International and its member parties are carried into effect by Social Democratic governments. On coming to power, Social Democrats all too often forget the promises they make before the parliamentary elections on the excuse of various concrete circumstances. The Labour Party Conference of 1973, for example, promised to reduce military expenditures by 1,000 million pounds (or by one-third), but after Labour formed its government, the reduction amounted to a mere 50 million pounds. Neither did Labour keep its promise to reduce the share of national resources allocated for defence to the level of other West European NATO countries. Military expenditures approved under the Labour government (4.75 per cent of the GNP) were clearly in excess of the average figure for the European NATO allies.¹

In the Federal Republic of Germany, too, military expenditures continued rising under the Social Democratic government. From 1969 to 1980 direct arms spending rose by 105 per cent in the state budget. And despite protests inside the party and in the country as a whole, the Social Democratic leaders gave their consent to the stationing of US medium-range missiles in the FRG.

On the whole, the foreign policy practices of Social Democratic

¹ See *Pravda*, February 28, 1978.

parties show that their approach to key international problems is in many ways—as before—inconsistent and contradictory. This was clearly seen, among other things, in their approach to the question of “re-arming” NATO. Indeed, while paying lip service to the need of struggle for detente, the leadership of a number of West European Social Democratic parties (e.g., the SPD and the Italian Socialist Party) in effect approved the decision of NATO’s December session (Brussels 1979) on stationing the latest types of US nuclear missiles in Western Europe.

Still, there are many factors to show that fairly large segments of the international Social Democratic movement are more and more clearly aware of the dangers created by steps that complicate the world situation and lead to an arms build-up. The National Executive of the British Labour Party has firmly condemned the plans of stationing cruise missiles on the British Isles in a number of its public statements. The Labourites also opposed the Conservative government’s intention to modernise British strategic submarine-based nuclear arms. The Panhellenic Socialist Movement has taken a strongly negative view of NATO’s plans. Warning the Greek government against allowing the Pentagon to heighten its influence in the country, it appealed to the ruling echelon to recall the request of re-admitting Greece to NATO’s military organisation. The Netherlands Party of Labour has declared its refusal to blindly follow the decisions of NATO militarists. An analogous tendency has largely shaped the attitude of the Belgian Socialist Party, whose leadership called for negotiations on mutual disarmament and for a nuclear-free zone in Europe before a final decision would be taken to commission any new system of nuclear arms. The Social Democratic Party of Finland came out with a sober evaluation of the current situation and the grave dangers created by the American method of regulating international relations “from positions of strength”. The Finnish Social Democrats issued a special statement stressing the peace-loving character of the Soviet Union’s foreign policy and the constructive nature of the Soviet proposals for immediately continuing negotiations on security; they levelled criticism at the idea of deploying new nuclear weapons systems in Western Europe and issued a call to avoid actions and decisions that might complicate the further development of detente. And in many ways similar position was taken by the Spanish Socialists and by certain groups within the Social Democratic parties in Scandinavian countries.¹

Despite the acuteness of the problem, not all Socialist and Social Democratic parties of Western Europe saw fit to declare their view of the US intention to deploy new nuclear weapons systems in the

¹ See *Pravda*, December 11, 1979.

Old World. Such an evasive position was taken, among others, by the leadership of the French and Austrian Socialist parties.

The Left within various Social Democratic parties took a firm stand against the dangerous US plans of militarising Western Europe. The call to the FRG ruling elite "to act in the interests of the country's national independence", "not to make it an American vassal", resounded loud and clear at the June 1980 Congress of Young Socialists in Hannover.¹ Caustic criticism of the Conservative government which had reacted negatively to Soviet peace proposals was levelled by the left wing of the British Labour Party. The left current in the Socialist Party of France, too, took a strongly critical stand against the policy of the United States and NATO.

Doubts concerning the Atlantic dogmas are surfacing more and more strongly among the Social Democratic rank and file. The continuing anti-NATO sentiment within the British Labour Party is a case in point: its rank and file is demanding ever more insistently that the leadership promote the demands that are down in policy documents to wind up US nuclear bases in Britain. The Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) has also rejected plans for Spain's entry into NATO.

In the 70s, "Europeanism" became one of the most typical features of the foreign policy followed by Europe's Social Democratic parties. Above all, this meant backing up the economic integration of Western Europe with political and military integration. As Social Democrats see it, this would help Europe become an independent power centre that would distance itself equally from the United States and the socialist countries. But this dominant orientation on invigorating West European independence combines in the foreign-policy strategy of most Social Democratic parties with the intention of preserving military and political ties with the United States.

For all the contradictory and inconsistent nature of the changes seen in the attitudes of the international Social Democratic movement in the 70s, they have on the whole helped bring closer the positions of Communists and Socialists on a number of key international problems, and have created a more favourable climate for carrying out certain practical measures aimed at settling important national and international issues.

CO-OPERATION BETWEEN COMMUNISTS AND SOCIALISTS IN THE FIGHT FOR DETENTE

The struggle of progressives for detente, for an end to the arms race, and for European security in the late 60s and early 70s, and the involvement in this struggle of ever broader political forces, gave spe-

¹ See *Vorwärts*, June 6, 1980.

cial significance and urgency to the problems of Communist-Socialist unity and co-operation and, too, helped extend the possibilities of such co-operation. Leaning on the substantially greater opportunities that had appeared in the struggle for peace and international detente, the Communist parties and the international Communist movement laid a special accent at the end of the 60s on elaborating and carrying out pertinent practical measures.

The most crucial problems of our time—peace, security, ending the arms race, co-operation, and international detente—stood at the centre of the Conference of the Communist and Workers' Parties of Europe held in Berlin in June 1976. Its final document, unanimously adopted by the Conference, contained a large-scale programme of actions and effective measures aimed at furthering detente and consolidating European security, protecting and strengthening democracy and national independence, and achieving beneficial co-operation and mutual understanding among nations.

The programme contained a detailed examination of all aspects relating to the ways and means of strengthening peace, terminating the arms race, and combatting the war danger. Giving detente material expression, especially in the military field, stood at the centre of the programme. The Communist parties favoured eliminating Europe's division into blocs, the simultaneous dissolution of NATO and the Warsaw Treaty, and, as a first step, dissolution of their military organisations. The Conference document specially emphasised the need "to remove the danger of nuclear war, the unleashing of which would be the greatest crime against humanity."¹

The Conference devoted special attention to the relation between peaceful co-existence and class struggle in the setting of international detente. Despite speculation by reactionary ideologists and "left" revisionists, who tried to prove the incompatibility of detente and class struggle, the European Communist parties declared that "the policy of peaceful coexistence, active cooperation between states irrespective of their social systems, and international détente correspond both to the interests of each people as well as to the cause of progress for the whole of mankind and in no way mean the maintenance of the political and social status quo in the various countries, but on the contrary create optimum conditions for the development of the struggle of the working class and all democratic forces as well as for the implementation of the inalienable right of each and every people freely to choose and follow its own course of development, for the struggle against the rule of the monopolies, and for socialism."² As the Political Bureau of the CC CPSU pointed

¹ Ibid., p. 31.

² *For Peace, Security, Cooperation and Social Progress in Europe*. Berlin, June 29-30, 1976, p. 46.

out, the Conference "demonstrated the indissoluble connection of the struggle for peace with the struggle for social progress and the common will of the parties participating in the Conference to work for democracy and socialism with consideration for the situation and national traditions in various countries and for the common laws governing the development of society."¹

Following up the principles formulated at the Conference, Communists mounted new serious efforts to secure co-operation with Socialist and Social Democratic parties.

Ever greater importance here attached to mutual understanding and co-operation at international level. The role of the ruling Communist parties, which acted in the name of socialist community countries, increased accordingly. So did their dialogue with the Social Democratic movement. "In accordance with the line laid down by the 1969 International Meeting", said the Central Committee report to the Twenty-fourth Congress of the CPSU, "the CPSU is prepared to develop cooperation with Social Democrats both in the struggle for peace and democracy, and in the struggle for socialism, without, of course, making any concessions in ideology and revolutionary principles."² The resolution adopted on the Central Committee report said that the Congress had instructed the CC CPSU to assist in arranging joint actions and co-operation with mass organisations and movements, with Socialists and Social Democrats, in the interests of the common struggle against imperialism.³

The Twenty-fifth Congress of the CPSU held in 1976 noted that in accordance with the principles established by the Twenty-fourth Congress contacts had visibly expanded with Socialist and Social Democratic parties of a number of countries, including Finland, Belgium, Japan, Great Britain, and France. Stating that the CPSU would continue to combat all signs of anti-communism and anti-Sovietism occurring in the Social Democratic movement, that it would not relax its struggle against opportunism, the Central Committee report pointed out: "However, we can be and are united with social-democrats, conscious of their responsibility for peace, and all the more with social-democratic workers, by a common concern for the security of the peoples, a wish to contain the arms race, and to repulse fascism, racialism and colonialism. It is precisely on this plane that we displayed and will continue to display initiative and goodwill."⁴

¹ *Pravda*, July 3, 1976.

² *24th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, March 30-April 9, 1971. Documents*, Moscow, 1971, p. 28.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 246.

⁴ *Documents and Resolutions. XXVth Congress of the CPSU*, Moscow, 1976, p. 39.

The goodwill unfailingly shown by the CPSU and other Communist parties, their persistence and sense of principle in the fight to unite all actual and potential champions of peace and detente, are a most important factor stimulating further progress in the relations between Communists and Socialists. This was borne out, among other things, by the visit to Moscow of the Socialist International study group on disarmament at the end of September and in the beginning of October 1979. The Soviet participants in the talks and members of the Socialist International study group re-affirmed their devotion to detente and agreed that the arms race should be stopped without delay. The talks showed that there were also certain discrepancies in approach to some aspects of disarmament. The Soviet Communists and the Social Democrats confirmed all the same, that if both sides showed good will, these discrepancies would not obstruct the search for solutions to the existing problems.¹

The Central Committee Report to the Twenty-sixth Congress of the CPSU registered the importance of the Party's contacts and ties with leaders of the Socialist International and its affiliated parties on issues related to the war danger. It stressed at the same time that, since it possessed "considerable political weight", the Social Democratic movement of the present day "could do more for the defence of the vital interests of the peoples and, above all, for the consolidation of peace, for improving the international situation, repulsing fascism and racism, and the offensive of the reactionary forces on the political rights of the working people."²

Contacts and ties between Communists and Socialists within various international democratic associations and forums grew visibly stronger in the 70s. This was true, among others, of the World Congress of Peace Forces (1973), the Brussels Assemblies for European Security, and the International Commission for Inquiry into the Crimes of the Military Junta in Chile. This had a most beneficial effect on the results achieved by the listed forums and, indeed, enhanced the general influence of the democratic public at large on the processes of detente and the struggle against fascism, reaction and militarism.

For all that, there were still no few serious difficulties and obstacles in the fight for co-operation between Communists and Socialists in consolidating peace and detente, and promoting disarmament. Conspicuous among them were the surviving allegiance of Social Democratic leaders to so-called Atlantic solidarity, their policy of maintaining the military confrontation in Europe and in other parts of the world, and their efforts to weaken the bonds of solidarity and

¹ See *Pravda*, October 5, 1979.

² *Documents and Resolutions. The 26th Congress of the CPSU*, p. 25.

co-operation among countries of the socialist community. No few complications were caused by the unceasing attempts of influential Social Democratic quarters to interfere in the internal affairs of socialist countries. The support of neocolonialist principles in relation to developing countries shown by some prominent right-wing Social Democrats, their hostility to certain progressive regimes in these countries, have in effect precluded mutual understanding between Communists and Social Democrats on some imperative problems of the developing countries, such as overcoming economic backwardness, combatting the related world-wide food problem, combatting racist regimes, and so on.

While firmly opposing such policies, the Communist parties took account of the fact that the ties of the Social Democratic and Socialist parties with the working class, with other segments of the working people, the mainstream processes within those parties and the positive tendencies in international relations were creating requisite conditions for gradually overcoming or at least blunting the obstacles. The more determined the struggle was for the political unity of the working class at national and international level, the more significant were the changes within the Social Democratic movement.

The Communist and workers' parties held that the struggle for joint action at international and national level was a *single* process. They were aware, too, that struggle at one of these levels stimulated the struggle at the other, and vice versa. This does not mean, however, that the more favourable international climate for co-operation between Communists and Social Democrats has removed all the main obstacles to such co-operation within individual countries. A group of Social Democratic and Socialist parties (the so-called northern group represented by the British Labour Party, the Social Democratic Party of Germany, the Socialist Party of Austria, the Social Democratic Labour Party of Sweden, the Netherlands Labour Party, and others) continued to rule out the possibility and need for contacts and agreements with the Communists of their respective countries. While they tacitly acknowledged and accepted Communist support on a number of international issues, and in Sweden even at parliamentary level, they refuse all offers of joint action on the internal political scene. Despite the official course of these Social Democratic parties, however, united action on various concrete issues was achieved at grassroots level. And though the reformist leaders tried to stop this tendency by means of disciplinary actions, it was stable enough and lasting.

The picture was also complicated and conflicting as regards the Social Democratic and Socialist parties which displayed a lively tendency to establish contacts and co-operation with Communist

parties in the early 70s. This applied above all to the Romanic countries (the so-called southern group of parties).

The biggest step towards united action of working-class parties was made in France. The long and persevering struggle of the French Communists to establish co-operation with the French Socialist Party resulted in the adoption of a Joint Government Programme of the PCF, PSF and Left Radicals in June 1972. The 1973 parliamentary elections, the 1974 presidential elections, and the 1977 municipal elections were highlighted by unity of workers' parties and brought them a conspicuous success. Working hand in hand with the trade unions, they acted in unison to safeguard the interests of the working people and counter the social-economic policy of the government. As a result, the positions of the left, of the democratic forces, grew considerably stronger.

The major success of working-class unity was later undermined, however, by a crisis that erupted within the left alliance. Shortly before the 1978 parliamentary elections, differences grew stronger between the PCF and the Socialist Party over specific interpretations of the Joint Government Programme. And this had an immediate effect on the elections, with the rightist parties winning and the left gaining fewer votes than expected.

After the first round of the 1981 presidential elections, when the Communist Party threw its weight behind François Mitterrand and thereby greatly contributed to his election in the second round and, thereupon, to the left victory in the parliamentary elections and the shaping of the presidential majority in the National Assembly, co-operation between Communists and Socialists was renewed. Indeed, it gained a higher level: Communist ministers joined the government headed by Socialist Pierre Mauroy. More, the Communist and Socialist parties worked out a common orientation on the basic aspects of government policy.¹

One of the main reasons for successful co-operation of the two parties, despite all difficulties and contradictions, was that the idea of left unity had struck deep root among the mass of the people. The majority of the working people in France came out for left unity quite clearly in the presidential and parliamentary elections of 1981.

At the junction of the 60s and 70s a positive development was witnessed in the attitude towards Communists of the Italian Socialist Party. A resolution of the PSI Central Committee plenum held in Rome in October 1971 renounced the policies of the 60s when the PSI leadership had fenced itself off from the left, had mounted a struggle against the Italian Communist Party and considered the

¹ For details see Chapter 10 of this volume.

left-of-centre government bloc the only possible choice. In November 1972, this development was entrenched by the PSI Congress. Despite certain inconsistencies (notably the statement that PCI participation in the government was as yet "untimely"), the Congress firmly rejected the insistent calls of the Demochristian and the Social Democratic Party leadership to break off co-operation with Communists in the trade unions, local self-administration bodies, and so on. Favourable conditions arose for establishing mutual understanding between the PCI and PSI, for joint discussion of immediate political goals, and for comparing the viewpoints of the two parties concerning the basic problems of the struggle of the working class and all other democratic forces. This resulted in closer co-operation between Communists and Socialists in municipalities, and in provincial and regional councils. The range and scale of joint action by Communist and Socialist workers in the mass movement increased. Communists and Socialists co-ordinated their efforts in combatting the centrist Andreotti government (1972-1973), in the 1975 municipal elections, and in the 1976 parliamentary elections. After the 1975 elections, Left administrations were formed in many communes, provinces and regions, in which Communists and Socialists worked together to good advantage. In 1976 and 1977, the Italian Socialist Party came out officially in favour of Communists participating in government.

But the co-operation between the PCI and PSI did not eliminate differences between them over strategic and ideological issues. More, after Craxi came to the PSI leadership in 1976, symbolising a general rightward shift in the party, these differences grew considerably sharper. In 1978 and 1979 the Socialists mounted a bitter ideological polemic with the Communist Party over the attitude to Leninism, the socialist community, democratic centralism, and the strategic line of "historical compromise". The polemic affected the relations between the two parties at the centre and locally, and had a detrimental effect on the results of the 1979 parliamentary elections. The undisguised intention of the PSI leaders to change the relation of forces in the working-class movement in their own favour, to bypass the PCI now from the "left" and now from the right, their efforts to tighten bonds with the Social Democratic Party of Germany and other right-wing parties in the Socialist International—all this hindered joint action by the two parties and created new obstacles to unity.

It had seemed in the initial period of the anti-fascist democratic revolution in Portugal (April 1974—April 1975) that all objective premises were at hand to overcome the differences that had divided Socialists and Communists before the events of April 25, 1974, and that there was good ground for contacts and co-operation between

them in rooting out fascism and democratising society. Initially, the PCP and PSP did, indeed, co-ordinate efforts, though difficulties and complications kept arising. In many ways, co-operation was secured and furthered by the political alliance of the nation's anti-fascist and democratic forces. But as social, economic and political transformations made headway, the Socialist Party leadership, backed to the hilt by Social Democrats in the West, had gradually begun to shift from co-operation to "neutralising" Communists. This was especially clear after the Constituent Assembly elections (April 1975), when Socialists gained the biggest number of votes and became the leading party in the government coalition. Their claims to political leadership increased visibly. Their anti-communist positions became more blatant. In the long run, this wrecked all co-operation. And having lost so powerful and prestigious an ally as the Communist Party, the Socialists began colluding with centrist and rightist forces. As a result, their policy of class co-operation became social-reformist through and through, based in theory and practice on the so-called democratic socialism.

The relationship between Communists and the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party was less dramatic. The tradition of co-operation dating to Franco times often helped establish good relations. But the Socialist bid to set up a two-party system in the country amounted, in effect, to a bid to push the Communists off the political scene and spurned united action in the struggle for the working people's interests.

That co-operation and contacts with Communists were possible in principle was repeatedly acknowledged by the leadership of the Belgian Socialist Party, whose 1974 programme even registered the need for uniting all progressive forces, without prejudice to any of them in the fight against exploitation. This, it said, would lead to the emergence of a progressive bloc counterweighing the conservative bloc. The first time the Belgian Socialists voiced the idea of a progressive front with Communist participation was in 1969, and they re-affirmed it in 1974. Still, Communist proposals to carry it into effect elicited evasive replies only, implying that non-communist left forces should unite first and consolidate themselves before contacts with the Communist Party would be arranged. From time to time, this official line was criticised by left-wingers in the Socialist Party, though without tangible results. But the very fact that working-class co-operation was envisaged by the Belgian Socialists who had earlier been openly hostile, spoke of the emergence of objective and subjective factors that compelled the reformist party to think of working together with Communists.

The shift within the Romanic, southern group of Reformist Socialist parties in favour of contacts and co-operation with Communists

led to an attempt to form a regional grouping in the Socialist International framework to co-ordinate a democratic solution of the crisis, to organise European security and co-operation and to ensure joint action by the left, including the Communist parties, in capitalist states. After a preliminary exchange of opinion, these items were put on the agenda of a conference of South European Socialist parties held in Paris in January 1976. Most of the speakers showed interest in resolving the acute social-economic problems in their countries and ending the differences between the political parties and mass organisations of the working people. "It is hard to say," the *Pravda* wrote, "how much these views reflect the actual position of the parties represented in Paris. But it is a good thing that pronouncements of this sort have been made at so highly responsible a time for Western Europe."¹ In effect, the matter has made no headway due, among other things, to the increased anti-communism of the Portuguese Socialist Party's leadership and the Belgian Socialist Party's return to the government coalition. Still, the tendency among a number of large Socialist International parties to legitimise co-operation with Communists at national level, and this in a considerable portion of capitalist Europe, is highly important in itself despite the serious opposition inside and outside the parties concerned. In January 1976, at a conference of 18 West European Socialist and Social Democratic Parties in Elsinore, Denmark, leaders of the German, Austrian and Swedish parties failed, however hard they tried, to have the gathering condemn co-operation with Communists.

The controversy over contacts with Communists is also under way in a number of Social Democratic and Socialist parties that had for years and years shied from co-operating with Communists. This applies above all to the Finnish Social Democrats. As a result of persistent efforts by the Communist Party and by realistic leaders of the Social Democratic Party of Finland co-operation between them at a government level was resumed in 1975-1976 in a setting of deteriorating social-economic conditions with the avowed purpose of finding an escape from the crisis that was gripping the country. The complexity of the internal political set-up and the reformist orientation of the Social Democratic leaders did little to help this new experiment to succeed. All the same, the intensive search for rapprochement and mutual understanding between the two parties did not end. The need for co-operation with Communists on short-term and medium-term programmes was recorded in a number of Social Democratic party documents and re-affirmed in its leaders' statements. At the same time, however, the Social Democrats sidestepped a Com-

¹ *Pravda*, February 13, 1976.

munist Party proposal to draw up a broad joint action programme that would impart to working-class co-operation the look of a political alliance aimed at resolving social-economic problems in the interests of all segments of the working people.

In Britain, as we have already noted, the general leftward shift of the working-class movement witnessed the lifting of bans introduced by a number of unions at the end of the 40s and in the early 50s on electing Communists to their executive committees and on the participation of Communists in annual union conferences. In April 1973, the ban was lifted on Labourites participating in the work of the Anglo-Soviet and Anglo-Hungarian friendship societies, and the Anglo-Romanian Association.

Fighting for a conclusive repeal of all bans and prohibitions directed against Communists, the Communist Party of Great Britain is working to establish contacts with left-wing Labour groups critical of the anti-communist policy of their party's right-wing leadership. But though sometimes left-wing Labourites act hand in hand with Communists on particular issues and voice coinciding views on some social-economic problems, they are deaf to the Communist calls for organisational co-operation and refuse to see Communists as a political partner. In the highly intricate conditions created by the predominance of trade unionism in Britain's working-class movement, the Communists are continually looking for new ways and means of establishing contacts with left forces as the foundation for restricting and undermining the positions of the movement's right wing.

The growing influence of the Communist Party of Japan had given momentum to the Socialist Party's tendency towards proletarian unity since the late 50s. Above all, this resulted in joint actions on a national scale—meetings and demonstrations against the American-Japanese "security treaty", the US aggression in Vietnam, environmental pollution, rising prices and taxes, and so on. Co-operation between Communists and Socialists at local level (especially in elections to bodies of self-government) gave the left a majority in the municipalities of a number of the country's largest cities. At first the Communist Party and then also the Socialists drew up projects for a democratic coalition government, and though there were substantial distinctions between them, their approach to the forms of struggle against monopolies (combining parliamentary and extra-parliamentary methods) and the aims and tasks they defined for the projected government coalition, were much the same. In the mid-70s, however, anti-unitary tendencies won out in the Socialist Party. Its right wing became more active, inciting suspicion of Communists, thus obstructing a rapprochement between the two largest left opposition parties and inflicting much damage to the left. Despite protests of part of the rank and file and of several indus-

trial trade union federations, the leadership of the Socialist Party, backed by SOHYO, renounced co-operation with the Communists and formed a coalition with the centrist parties—the Democratic Socialist Party and Komeito—in early 1980.

The objective situation in the capitalist countries favours unitarian processes in the working-class movement. Attempts at squashing them tend to strengthen rightist, authoritarian tendencies in the capitalist states, which, in turn, is liable to hold back the positive shifts surfacing on the international political scene. The Social Democrats have no interest in such a turn of events, because their success or failure depends in many ways on whether they fulfil their promise to the masses of dampening the social consequences of the current aggravation of the crisis of capitalism, of promoting detente and disarmament. This fact, indeed, is visibly limiting the concessions of Social Democrats to rightist political parties, since they need left support to contain the latter.

* * *

For more than 20 years Communist parties and other left-wing forces have worked hard to overcome division and establish united action by the main political forces of the working class in the interests of consolidating peace, safeguarding and extending democratic gains, and securing social progress. There have been ups and downs in this long struggle, with periods of increasing unity giving place in some countries to periods of increasing conflict. By and large, however, tangible results have been achieved, with a positive effect both on the struggle of national detachments of the working-class movement and on processes on the international scene. The shift of the socio-political axis to the right as a direct effect of the cold war and the sharp aggravation of the split in the working-class movement in the late 40s and early 50s, was halted. In a large number of cases, indeed, the working-class movement and its organisations defeated the right-wing conservative forces, blocking the designs of political reactionaries bent on holding down the working class and its organisations.

The progress achieved in establishing constructive co-operation between Communists and Social Democrats on the international plane not only created a new climate in international relations but also led to concrete measures lessening the threat of war, putting the brakes on the arms race, and consolidating European security.

Attempts at organising a new rightward shift on the social-political scene at the end of the 70s and in the early 80s in order to overcome the difficulties of the capitalist economy at the expense of the working people and to wreck international detente, had visibly

complicated the world situation. As stressed at the Meeting of European Communist and Workers' Parties for Peace and Disarmament held in April 1980 in Paris matters had come to a pass where either the arms race would place in doubt humanity's further progress or the joint action of nations would frustrate the dangerous plans of the opponents of detente. Representatives of Communist and Workers' parties exhaustively studied the reasons for the sharp deterioration of the international situation and unanimously approved an Appeal to the Peoples of the European Countries for Peace and Disarmament. It said among other things: "We Communists are advocates of peace, we want disarmament, cooperation and friendship among nations. . . . We are prepared, in forms acceptable to all, for consultations and exchanges of views with all the forces in Europe that are resolved to act, in the Helsinki spirit and in anticipation of Madrid, in the interests of continuing the policy of detente and exploring avenues for reducing armaments in our continent."¹

The dangers implicit in the policy of the more aggressive imperialist elements were forcefully stressed at the Twenty-sixth Congress of the CPSU. As pointed out in the Central Committee Report to the Congress, "the policy of the aggressive imperialist forces has already considerably heightened international tensions with all the dangerous consequences that this entails."² Advancing a large number of far-reaching initiatives aimed at carrying detente and disarmament into effect, the Congress emphatically stressed the importance of Communist co-operation with Social Democrats, trade unions, and all other democratic and peace-loving forces.³

The imperialist course of aggravating the international situation has affected the political line of a number of Social Democratic parties, which could not fail to complicate the struggle for working-class unity. But difficulties of that sort cannot wipe out the positive experience of the struggle for unity or the results achieved in previous years.

To be sure, the cardinal problems bedevilling relations between Communists and Socialists are still far from having been solved. The main thing obstructing further progress is the insufficient depth and solidity of the ideological and political changes within the Social Democratic movement and in the thinking of the masses who follow it, and often, too, the declarative nature of the Socialists' new principles and demands, that is, a rift between word and deed. That is the main reason for the insufficient endurance of some of the already concluded agreements. When negotiating with Communist

¹ *World Marxist Review*, No. 6, 1980, p. 4.

² *Documents and Resolutions. The 26th Congress of the CPSU*, p. 35.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

parties on some issue, Social Democratic leaders are guided all too often by purely tactical or purely party, rather than national, interests, seeking, among other things, to win additional votes in elections with Communist help. To this day, Socialists and Social Democrats tend to exert ideological pressure on Communist parties in order to alter their world outlook and political positions.

The history of the struggle for unity shows that the scale of possible co-operation depends on the concrete course of the class struggle and the impact made on events by the revolutionary vanguard of the working class, by its skill in finding flexible means of arranging class and general democratic alliances without prejudice to its revolutionary principles.

CONCLUSION

The period since fascism's crushing defeat in World War II has been a time of tempestuous growth for the international working-class movement, for its influence on the march of history. Having come into being in the past century in a few capitalist countries of Western Europe and North America, the working-class movement had, by the latter half of the 20th century, grown into a powerful social-political force. Its chief gain—the socialist world system—became the key factor of social progress on the scale of all mankind and exercises a decisive influence on current history. Developments in our era have thus wholly confirmed the brilliant conclusions of Marx, Engels and Lenin, the founders of scientific socialism, about the leading role of the working class, of the working-class movement, in the revolutionary transformation of society and humanity's passage from capitalism to socialism.

The working-class movement in countries and regions in the zone of modern capitalism developed under the immediate impact of the world-wide historical changes witnessed since World War II. Its detachments combatting capitalism in the latter's main citadels are backed by their alliance with other powerful revolutionary forces—the socialist world system and the national liberation movement. The new alignment and relation of antagonistic social forces active in the modern world exercised a tremendous influence, as before, on the course and direction of the working-class struggle, paving the way to many of its gains and acting as a key factor behind the development of the workers' class consciousness. In many ways, too, they changed the character and content of the problems faced by the working-class movement. At the same time, the magnitude and complexity of the tasks carried out by the movement in capitalist countries increased as did its historical role. As stressed at the 1969 International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, the working class "is the principal driving force of the revolutionary

struggle, of the entire anti-imperialist, democratic movement".¹

The contents of this volume show that the conditions in which the working-class movement developed during the period in question were shaped by a close interlacement of the global historical social processes, notably the dynamics of the contradiction between world socialism and world capitalism, with the processes that deepened capitalism's internal contradictions and its general crisis, with changes in the productive forces and relations of production of capitalist society, and in its political superstructure and ideology. This interlacement was fully in evidence at the beginning of the period: the post-war upswing of the working-class and democratic movement, which had led to the victory of socialist revolutions in a number of South-East and Central European countries, was closely related, on the one hand, with the role of the Soviet Union in crushing fascism, which greatly enhanced socialism's international influence, and, on the other, with the aggravation of capitalist contradictions expressed through World War II, a conflict between imperialism's totalitarian fascist tendencies and the democratic aspirations of the mass of the people. At the same time, the specific alignment and relation of forces within the anti-Hitler coalition, which left an imprint on the political situation in post-war Europe and the Far East, predicated the concrete results of the revolutionary upswing: the possibility of revolution winning in a group of capitalist countries as well as a definite slowing down of the revolutionary process in other countries.

A no less complicated and many-sided interaction of external and internal factors characterised the working-class movement of the subsequent three decades. The scientific and technical revolution and the state-monopoly restructuring of capitalism, which both exercised a deep-going influence on the working class, on the objectives and forms of its struggle, were a legitimate result of the growth of capitalist society's productive forces, which came into increasingly acute conflict with its relations of production and were, at the same time, capitalism's "response" to the growth and consolidation of world socialism, to the collapse of the colonial system. Socialism's growing influence on the international situation, which gave rise to a steadily increasing tendency of passing from cold war to peaceful co-existence and co-operation between countries with opposite social systems, created conditions for a new upswing of the working-class movement spurred by the class contradictions immanent in capitalism. The new, higher dimension of the demands advanced by the working-class movement in capitalist countries, the widening of the immediate goals of its struggle, were fostered by deep-going changes

¹ *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow, 1969*, p. 24.

in the working and living conditions, the psychology and thinking of the working masses and, simultaneously, by the influence of the socialist example. International factors gained top importance even in situations in which the development of the class struggle in individual countries had created immediate chances for the working class and its allies to win political power and carry out deep-going anti-monopoly reforms opening the road to socialism.

Even at a relatively early stage of its history—in the 19th century—the working-class movement operated on the social-political scene as an international force. In the present era, owing to the much wider front of struggle between antagonistic social forces acting on a world scale what with the internationalisation of monopoly capital and its integrated system of politico-military blocs, the significance of the international bonds of the working-class movement increased and their content became more varied. This was especially clear at the junction of the 70s and 80s, when imperialist reaction mounted a counter-offensive against the forces of peace and progress in a bid to wreck the process of detente.

The internationalist principles of the working-class movement are most consistently embodied and carried forward in the ideology and activity of its vanguard, the Communist parties. Communists build their strategy of class struggle on the basis of these principles and, naturally, also the relations between parties within the communist movement. The participants in the 1976 Berlin Conference of European Communist and Workers' Parties, for example, expressed the common will and determination to "develop their internationalist, comradely and voluntary cooperation and solidarity on the basis of the great ideas of Marx, Engels and Lenin, strictly adhering to the principles of equality and sovereign independence of each Party, non-interference in internal affairs, and respect for their free choice of different roads in the struggle for social change of a progressive nature and for socialism. The struggle of each Party for socialism in its own country and its responsibility towards the working class and the people of that country are bound up with mutual solidarity among working people of all countries and all progressive movements and peoples in their struggle for freedom and the strengthening of their independence, for democracy, socialism and world peace."¹

Any tendency of distancing oneself from the existing socialism, from the experience of the CPSU and other Communist parties in socialist countries, as the vast majority of Communist parties of capitalist countries pointed out, did grave harm to the struggle for peace and socialism.

¹ *For Peace, Security, Cooperation and Social Progress in Europe*, pp. 40-41.

As is noted in the new edition of the Programme of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union adopted by the 27th CPSU Congress, "Disagreement over individual issues should not interfere with international cooperation among Communist parties and their concerted efforts.... But when the issues at hand is the revolutionary essence of Marxism-Leninism, the substance and role of real socialism, the CPSU will continue to rebuff opportunism and reformism, dogmatism and sectarianism from positions of principle".

The objective link of the working-class movement in the capitalist countries with the development of the anti-imperialist struggle of all world revolutionary forces, with the competition and struggle between socialism and capitalism during the period after World War II, is one of its key distinctive features. This link gave the working-class movement added strength and helped it to greatly extend its social and political positions in capitalist society and score a number of important victories. Throughout the period under review, the working-class movement exercised a formidable influence on economic and political processes in the capitalist countries, on the strategy and tactics of state-monopoly capitalism.

The struggle of the working class for its vital social and economic interests in developed capitalist countries was highlighted by serious gains. The workers' standard of living rose and their consumption of goods and cultural consumption went up considerably. The objective foundation for these changes was laid by the scientific and technical revolution, the changes it induced in working and living conditions, the increasing value of labour power, and the rising needs of the proletariat. But the demands of the productive forces as such could not have forced capitalists to make serious material concessions if they had not been backed by the struggle of the working class, by the strength of its organisation. The state-monopoly restructuring of capitalism and the introduction of certain principles of regulation in the spontaneous development of capitalist production were largely prompted by the wish of the ruling bourgeoisie to avoid economic upheavals fraught with any steep growth of anti-capitalist sentiments and of the revolutionary activity of the working people. As the experience of the 70s showed, this restructuring failed in the final analysis to secure a crisis-free development of capitalism; on the other hand it did enable the working-class movement to exploit the relatively long period of favourable economic activity to exercise effective pressure on the dominant class and secure a rise of real incomes.

Given the variety of concrete conditions that influenced the living standard of the various national and professional detachments of the proletariat (the economic strength of the bourgeoisie, its tac-

tics in class relations, the character and rate of growth of the national economy and of its various branches, changes in the proficiency and the professional structure of the work force, etc.), the leading tendencies of this process were determined by the grown real and potential capabilities of the working-class movement, the strength of its pressure on the monopolies and the state, the new relation of class forces on the national and international plane, and the example of world socialism.

The above factors also enabled the working-class movement to achieve substantial headway in expanding the social rights of the working people. The gains of the working-class movement in this field, far superior in some countries than anything the movement had managed to win in the preceding periods of history, were of fundamental significance: to use Marx's expression, they were new important victories for the political economy of the working class over the political economy of the bourgeoisie.

The introduction of pension schemes and other social benefits, paid leaves, legislative limits to the working week, national health care system, of universal secondary education, and other similar gains improved the material and social condition of the working class in most capitalist countries. They also showed that in the new historical situation, given competition between opposite social systems, the capability of the working-class movement and its influence on the economy and policy of capitalist countries had grown considerably. It was able to secure various material concessions from the bourgeoisie and, indeed, to fight successfully for the escalating social demands of the working class, for enhancing its legal status. Gaining ever more prominence in the activity of the working-class movement, this aspect upgraded the social dignity and requirements of the working people, impelling action against the entire system of class inequality and the monopoly of the dominant class on economic and political power. It was not in the least surprising that in some capitalist countries the struggle for working-class right spurred by the wish to obtain guarantees for the workers' material situation had in due course grown into a struggle for "economic democracy", for the workers' participation in production management.

Past experience and the economic and social history of modern capitalism show, however, that no gain of the working class has ever been irreversible in the capitalist environment. Monopoly capital has a variety of economic and political mechanisms that can reduce to nought any economic concession to the working class, strip the rights it won of any tangible content, and reintroduce the system of social discrimination and class privileges. As long as capitalism exists, so does capitalist exploitation. When compelled by workers' pressure to restrict the use of one set of methods of obtaining surplus-value, the bourgeoisie only redoubles its efforts to

apply other, more refined and better camouflaged, methods. While yielding ground to the pressure of the more organised and powerful detachments of the working class, the capitalists apply the crudest and the most predatory forms of exploitation to those which have less pull in the labour market and fewer opportunities for, and less experience of, struggle. Even at times marked by high rates of economic growth and employment and high per capita incomes, large groups of working people in advanced capitalist countries continued living in bitter poverty and under brutal social oppression. The CPSU Programme notes that the growing crisis of capitalism impels it constantly to manoeuvre, but "such manoeuvring is being increasingly combined with violent actions, with a direct assault by the monopolies and the bourgeois state on the living standards of working people".

The social and economic gains of the working-class movement were undermined by the deliberate tactics of the dominant class and, indeed, by the anarchy of production, the cyclic and other crises, which state-monopoly capitalism had not in the least managed to overcome. The crises of the 70s-80s again showed that instability and insecurity of the working man's economic situation and place in production is an organic feature of capitalist social relations.

During the economic growth of the 50s and 60s many bourgeois ideologists and politicians held in all earnest that the heightening of the workers' living standard, with the working class sharing in current consumer levels, would see the class struggle gradually disappear. In fact, however, the working class was constantly faced by the need to defend and consolidate its gains. Despite the varying intensity of strikes and other forms of class struggle from country to country, the militancy of the working-class movement was in no way affected by the changes in the workers' social and economic situation. This was borne out by the workers' visibly greater activity in the latter half of the 60s, their intensive struggle against the consequences of the economic crisis of the 70s, against ruling-class attempts to break the crisis at the expense of the working people. And though the dominant bourgeoisie tried to make the most of the changes in the workers' situation to strengthen "class peace", the results of this were modest to say the least: by and large, the successful struggle for their social and economic demands tended to heighten the workers' awareness of their strength, their ability to resist the pressure of capitalists. There was evidence, indeed, that the socio-psychological make-up of the proletariat had changed—with its social and spiritual needs increasing and its intolerance of all signs of class inequality and capitalist abuse, gaining in intensity.

Changes in the productive forces and the relations of production, changes in capitalism's political system and the new features of its general crisis—all this in many ways complicated the struggle of the working class for its vital social and economic interests. Though the scientific and technical revolution has created tremendous opportunities for enriching the material and spiritual life of the people, capitalism tended to use it to redouble pressure on the working class and to perfect the methods of exploitation. This only led to greater instability and mass unemployment, to a loss of class identity and aggravated many problems of everyday life. The continuing concentration and monopolisation of capital (which is a key feature of state-monopoly capitalism), and the fact that the monopolies were joining forces with the state, greatly enhanced the capability of the dominant class to manoeuvre, and extended the range of methods it could employ against the working-class movement. To combat a powerful transnational monopoly or a government practising an anti-workers social and economic policy was in many respects considerably harder than fighting an individual capitalist at enterprise level.

New problems arose for the workers' movement owing to the more complicated structure of the working class itself, to changes in its skills and professional composition induced by scientific and technical progress. The diversity of working conditions, of the content of labour, of situations in production and in trades, like the diversity in educational and cultural standards, diversified the concrete interests and demands of various groups. And these the working-class movement had to take into consideration and defend.

All these alterations in the conditions of the class struggle showed that the working-class movement could not carry out its tasks without substantially overhauling the content, and the forms and methods of its activity. This overhaul, which saw the working-class movement rise to a higher level of development, amounted, first of all, to a creative elaboration—in many cases on the initiative and with the participation of the mass of the workers—of more effective and dynamic forms of activity that enabled the working class to attain aims that had in the past usually been unattainable in the framework of the daily class struggle. One of the most typical examples was the ever broader use of strikes, that tried and true proletarian weapon, to combat unemployment, and the utilisation by working people of such methods as occupying enterprises and organising production on their own.

Second, in a number of countries the working-class movement began to intervene actively in decision-making at enterprise level and to organise production to suit the interests of the working people, pressing for real participation in management.

Third, the politicalisation of the workers' social and economic struggle proceeded apace, and their resolve to influence the policy of the state increased. In a number of capitalist countries the alternative economic and social programmes advanced by Communist parties and by trade unions became a tangible element in the political struggle.

Fourth, efforts to consolidate the workers' gains and interdict capitalist abuses became more vigorous. This may be illustrated by the battles over the regulation of labour relations by collective agreements, and by the greater influence of the working-class movement on the social legislation of bourgeois states.

Fifth, the activity of the working-class movement in the social and economic sphere gained new scope. More and more often it transcended the issue of wages and working conditions, and encompassed the entire set of national economic and social problems, grown more acute with the deepening of the general crisis of capitalism. In many countries working-class organisations showed an increasing interest in environmental protection, disarmament, demilitarising the economy, the character and trend of the country's foreign economic ties, questions of secondary and higher education, the advancement of backward areas, the rights of women and young people, and the quality of life as a whole. This heightened the role of the working-class movement as a national and international social-political force, extending and tightening its ties and cooperation with other democratic movements.

Speaking of the social and economic gains of the working-class movement in the setting of modern capitalism, of its growing participation in political affairs, its activity in organs of state and other institutions of bourgeois society, we must take note of the conflicting and disparate influence this is likely to exert on the development of the class struggle of the proletariat. Because the bourgeoisie is sure to try and use its forced concessions to "freeze" the class struggle and erode the independence and initiative of the working-class movement, to try and direct the workers' grown social and political activity towards "loyal" and "constructive" cooperation with the top state-monopoly echelon.

True, the tactic of social juggling, which implies various reforms, bribery and corruption of the workers' leaders and of certain groups of the working class, has always been a traditional and customary instrument to combat the class orientation of the working-class movement. But in this regard, too, state-monopoly capitalism devised many a novelty. Unlike the capitalism of the past, it did not confine itself to bribing just the privileged section of workers, the section known as the workers' aristocracy, and to arranging cooperation with just the leadership of Social Democratic parties and the

trade union bureaucracy. The chief aim of its policy vis-à-vis the workers was the latter's "social integration" in the capitalist system, encompassing not a mere segment of the working people but winning over the mass of the working people for its aims and principles. State-monopoly capitalism tried to introduce such "integration" at all levels—in the framework of enterprises, in the sphere of national policy, and in supranational bodies. For this use was made of the social and economic gains of the working class, which were portrayed as evidence of its growth into an equal participant in the process of capitalist enrichment, and also of the new rights gained by the working-class movement. The participation of members of the working class in various bodies of social and economic regulation was turned where possible into an instrument for subordinating the workers' activity to the aims of capitalist enterprise.

"Social integration", if it had ever come about, would have been the end of the working-class movement as an independent sociopolitical force. But, happily, the class struggle of the workers defeated this policy: of all the mass movements that exist in capitalist society, the working-class movement is today the most powerful, the most militant, and the best organised opponent of the omnipotence of monopoly capital.

Though state-monopoly capitalism failed to turn the working-class movement as a whole into an appendage of its system of government, it did in a number of countries manage for relatively long periods to use the leadership of some large Social Democratic parties and reformist trade unions, a part of their functionaries and representatives in governmental bodies and consultative institutions, for the practical furtherance of class cooperation. The decisive part here was, of course, played by the ideological and political posture of the conciliatory "workers' bureaucracy". But of no small significance, too, was the influence that the refurbished tactics of the bourgeoisie managed to gain on the minds of fairly large segments of the proletariat. The improvement of the material, social and legal status of these segments during the lifetime of a single generation enabled bourgeois propaganda to create the illusion that there had been a "social uplift" of the working class, that it was a sort of automatic effect created by the growth of the capitalist economy, and that employer and employed had common interests.

The crises of the 70s prompted the ruling bourgeoisie to make still more intensive use of various forms of class co-operation and partnership, combining them with an outright offensive on the vital interests and rights of the working class—with attempts to break the crisis at the expense of the working people being motivated this time by a "community of interests" in face of "common difficulties".

The peril for the working class of the "social integration" tactic, as we see, was not entirely eliminated. Combatting it was still an urgent task facing the working-class movement.

The qualitatively new positions of the working-class movement, the participation of workers' organisations in some economic management organs, made it more urgent to settle the problem of the relation between the action of the masses and the functions which workers' representatives exercised in their immediate contacts with the class adversary. Mass actions from below were being increasingly supplemented by negotiations and participation in various "joint" procedures and organs that produced concrete economic solutions. The experience of the working-class movement in some countries showed that this might dampen the class struggle, causing "top-echelon" and "peaceful" forms of workers' activity to predominate over militant forms, and in some cases reducing the function of workers' representatives to mere rubber-stamping of decisions made by the monopolies. That is why it was particularly important in the new stage that the working-class movement should work out and defend—through mass struggle—its own standpoint suiting the interests of the working class on all substantive economic, social, and political issues.

The experience of the working-class movement showed that in the capitalist environment many of its gains may be turned against it, notably against its consistently class-orientated, revolutionary tendencies. State-monopoly capitalism with its refined and centralised social tactics created no few additional possibilities for such a perversion of the results of the working-class struggle. Therefore, special importance attached here to the Marxist-Leninist principle of evaluating workers' gains in the context of their impact on the class consciousness and class struggle, and not only the economic situation, of the working people. The above also applied whole to the political gains of the working-class movement, to its political activity prompted by the need for protecting the immediate interests of the working people under the capitalist system. Lenin's judgement that the growth of the economic into a political struggle cannot alone advance the political and class consciousness of the workers is as true as ever in the latter half of the 20th century.¹

In the post-war decades the ideology and policy of state-monopoly capitalism drew on the concept (formulated, among others, by such pillars of bourgeois thought as Ralf Dahrendorf and Raymond Aron) which acknowledged the inevitability of class conflicts in "industrial" bourgeois societies, but reduced these conflicts, including the struggle on the political scene, to bargaining over incomes,

¹ See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, 1973, pp. 421, 422.

over the share of the pie to which each of the embattled classes had a claim. Using and emphasising some of the directions and tendencies that prevailed in the activity of the working-class movement, this theory and the appropriate practices were aimed at subordinating the class struggle of the proletariat to the logic and principles of the bourgeois "consumer society", at diverting the workers from actions on various substantive problems of the economic, social and political setup.

Although fairly influential currents in the working-class movement accepted these "rules of the game", this tactic, too, was on the whole defeated by the working class. Among the most striking proofs of this was the workers' struggle for *political democracy* in capitalist countries. This trend in their activity was of tremendous significance, because imperialism's tendency, especially in its state-monopoly phase, to suppress and emasculate democratic rights and freedoms was a great threat to the interests of the mass of the people and the future of historical progress, and seriously complicated the workers' struggle for a better future, and for socialism. Not only did the working-class movement come forward in the post-war decades as the most powerful social force opposing this tendency, but it also mounted a struggle for the development and deepening of democracy, for extending it over and above the limits of the formal bourgeois democracy.

The working-class movement played a prominent part in breaking the last of the fascist regimes in Europe—those in Portugal, Greece and Spain. It was the leading force behind the democratisation of the social and political system in those countries. Japan's working-class movement opposed reactionary attempts at carrying through constitutional and legislative changes that would have paved the way to the country's remilitarisation and to unrestricted police abuses. The working-class movement in Italy had saved the country from the immediate threat of a sharp curtailment of democratic freedoms and the establishment of police rule in the early 60s. It secured far-reaching democratic gains in local self-government and in spheres of social and civic legislation, pushing away the clerical reactionaries. The Italian working-class movement hit back forcefully at neofascism and attempts at reactionary militarist conspiracies, and at the activity of ultra-right and "left" terrorists who sought to undermine democracy.

In France, it is true, reactionary army mutinies of the late 50s and early 60s had led to a certain curtailment, but not elimination, of democratic institutions and rights. The reason lay in the strength of the working class and its organisations, and the reactionaries' fear of its already enacted but still largely potential mobilisation. The crushing defeat of the OAS gang, the consolidation of dem-

ocratic gains, and the drive to democratise the French political system—all this was attained only thanks to a new uplift of the working-class movement in the 60s and 70s, above all through the efforts of the French proletariat.

The working class in Britain frustrated the attempts at restricting its right to defend its interests. It came out firmly against racial inequality, in defence of the rights of immigrant working people.

Leaning for support on the working-class movement in other countries, many of the workers' organisations in the FRG fought stoutly against the anti-democratic *Berufsverbote*.

All these examples, whose number could be considerably increased, showed that the working-class movement in the capitalist countries was an active political force and that its struggle for democracy was influencing the internal political situation.

In some capitalist countries, the democratic slogans of the working-class movement were not purely proletarian. Frequently they were the "common motivation" which joined various segments of the masses in actions that became nation-wide in character and caused acute socio-political crises. Special importance in the development and deepening of democracy attached to the activity of representatives of the working-class movement, notably Communists, in local bodies of power. Despite the limited capacity of these bodies, worker activists often managed to make them seat of real, non-formal democracy working in the interests of the people and prompting them to participate in the class struggle.

The working-class movement in capitalist countries played an important part in safeguarding peace and national independence, and in the fight against colonialism. Many anti-imperialist mass campaigns, such as the French working peoples' campaigns to end the colonial wars in Vietnam and Algeria, the Japanese working people's campaign for the return of Okinawa, and campaigns of solidarity with struggles for national liberation and social progress, were conceived and grew under the immediate influence of the working-class movement in the countries concerned. The workers of many capitalist countries rendered strong and active support to the people of Vietnam in their fight against US aggression, and are now working for the international isolation of the racist South African regime and the fascist dictatorship in Chile.

In the grim cold war years the foremost detachments of the working-class movement—the Communist parties and consistently class-oriented trade unions—acted as a barrier to the imperialist plans of preparing and starting a war against the socialist countries. All the main currents in the West European working-class movement gave the full weight of their support to the policy of peaceful coexist-

ence with the socialist countries. The "Eastern policy" of the FRG, for example, which led to the solution of one of the most intricate post-war international problems in the spirit of peaceful coexistence and co-operation, took shape largely under the influence of the working-class movement in the early 70s.

The successes of detente visibly stimulated the working-class movement in capitalist countries to work for the consolidation of peace and against militarism. The interest in disarmament of many Social Democratic parties and of the trade unions increased considerably in the 70s. Even in the United States, where the influence of the military-industrial complex is especially strong and the working class has no massive political organisation of its own, influential forces emerged in the working-class movement advocating peaceful co-existence and opposing the arms race. The Unions for Peace organisation formed in the early seventies encompassed 35 trade unions with a membership of four million. In international politics, as we see, the role of the working-class movement increased visibly in the past several decades, and its contribution to the anti-war struggle has grown.

On the whole, as the contents of this volume attest, the period stretching from the latter half of the 40s to the 70s was highlighted by an uplift of the role and positions of the working-class movement in all spheres of life in capitalist countries, and by its new gains in the struggle for the social and economic interests and democratic rights of the working people, and in mobilising the public for the fight to avert a nuclear world war. As a result, the correlation of class forces in capitalist society has changed substantially and continues to tilt still more in favour of the working class and other segments of the working people.

To be sure, the above conclusion must not lead anyone to minimise the difficulties and contradictions that characterised the development of the working-class movement during the period under review, to minimise its weaknesses and setbacks or the acuteness and complexity of its problems. The Marxist-Leninist approach to each concrete stage in the history of the working-class movement calls for a maximally sober, scientifically verified consideration of the correlation of strength between the embattled classes. It also calls for an accurate analysis of the contribution made by each such stage to the worldwide historical process of mankind's revolutionary passage from capitalism to socialism.

Back in the early 20s, speaking of the outlook of socialist revolution in countries of the capitalist West, Lenin referred to the profound contradiction between the maturity of the material premises of socialism and the difficulty of leading the masses up to direct revolutionary struggle for socialism. "In Europe," he said, "it will

be immeasurably more difficult to start, whereas it was immeasurably more easy for us to start; but it will be more difficult for us to continue the revolution than it will be over there.”¹ In the past decades the situation changed in many ways in favour of the revolutionary forces: Communist parties and class-orientated trade unions grew stronger, in a number of countries the revolutionary current of the working-class movement gained much influence among the masses and fought successfully for a broad system of political alliances. Lenin’s strategy of anti-monopoly struggle, which grows over from resolving general democratic tasks step by step into immediate struggle for socialism, made the “beginning” of revolutionary change considerably easier.

Still, the contradiction pinpointed by Lenin continues to exist. This is due to the specific features of monopoly rule. Capitalism in industrially developed countries possesses enormous economic resources. They are used to maintain a powerful repressive machinery, on the one hand, and to finance the tactics of social juggling, bribing particular sections of the working people, and conditioning the masses in the spirit of anti-communism and class cooperation, on the other. No small role is played by the reformist and trade-unionist traditions that have taken relatively deep root in the mass movement of the working class and the consciousness of the working people in certain capitalist countries. Historically, reformism was strongest in those countries where capitalism had previously managed to avoid especially acute class collisions on the political scene, to squeeze the class struggle into relatively narrow “economic” confines, and to secure a comparatively “tranquil” and “gradual” social-political development (as in the Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian countries), or to exploit the cold war situation against the revolutionary working-class movement (as in the FRG).

The disparate historical conditions in various countries and regions of the capitalist world were one of the main reasons behind the ununiform growth there of consistently class-oriented, revolutionary tendencies in the working-class movement. This was why the workers’ class struggle, especially on the political scene, differed in intensity and form from country to country throughout the post-war period, as did the tendency towards deep-going social change common for the entire capitalist zone. In some countries, such as France, Italy, Spain and Portugal, we saw a direct struggle for power develop in the 70s between the democratic opposition, including the working class, and those who sought to maintain the prevailing order. In other countries, the subjective premises for such struggle were only in the act of maturing—in some cases at a re-

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, 1977, p. 93.

latively slow pace. Most typical in this respect was the example of the United States, the capitalist world's strongest country. In many countries the revolutionary process was confined to a growth of the class consciousness and sense of political involvement of the masses, who were still under the overriding influence of reformism.

As we see from the events of the 70s, the dissimilar growth of anti-monopoly and anti-capitalist tendencies in the working-class movement from country to country, and the continuing co-ordinated and vigorous actions of international capitalism (which had consolidated itself) against revolutionary anti-monopoly forces, greatly complicated the revolutionary process.

For bourgeois and reformist ideologists the absence of victorious socialist revolutions in the most advanced capitalist countries in the 50s to 70s was proof that the Marxist-Leninist doctrine and its conclusion that the proletariat, the working-class movement, played the chief role in the revolutionary transformation of capitalist society, was "obsolete". Comparing the current situation with various periods and events in the past history of the West European working-class movement highlighted by upswings of mass revolutionary activity and acceptance by considerable segments of the proletariat of revolutionary slogans and programmes, devotees of this view came to the conclusion that the "heroic era" of the working-class movement in capitalist states was irretrievably over and that the movement had exhausted its revolutionary potential. This they substantiated with tendentious interpretations of the changes witnessed in the situation and mentality of the working class and the forms and objectives of working-class action during the past several decades.

But what was the true state of things? What was the true significance of the post-war stage in the history of the working-class movement as a revolutionary and transformational force of the capitalist world? Are there any serious grounds for the view that this stage was regressive in current conditions?

It is important that the answers to these questions should be based on dependable, scientifically sound criteria of the level of the movement, of its distinctive features and tendencies during each specific period. In the absence of such sound criteria historical comparisons would lack true significance and would be no more than arbitrary.

To be valid, comparisons must fall within definite periods. It is one thing to compare periods that have a clearly defined beginning and end, and quite another to compare "complete" periods with a stage of development that has not yet run out its course and has not therefore brought all its features and tendencies into evi-

dence. Yet today that is exactly how we see the stage in the history of the working-class movement of capitalist countries that began in the late 40s and early 50s of the 20th century in immediate association with conspicuous world-historical processes: the shaping and consolidation of the socialist world system, the break-up of the colonial system and the essentially new phase of the national liberation movement, the new deepening of capitalism's intrinsic contradictions under the impact of the scientific-technical revolution, the transition to state-monopoly capitalism and the increased internationalisation of monopoly capital, and the growing struggle against the threat of a nuclear world war and for the peaceful coexistence and cooperation of countries belonging to opposite social systems. In the first three decades after the war the cumulative effect of these processes on the class struggle of the working people, on the working-class movement, kept growing stronger and became increasingly profound and multifarious. Accordingly, the objectives and forms of the class struggle developed and became more diverse to keep pace with this process, though many of them were still in their incipient, sometimes embryonic, stage. In other words, the stage of the working-class movement that began soon after World War II ended had not at that time revealed all its basic features and peculiarities, and was still in the act of unfolding.

The revolutionary process and the revolutionary struggle of the working class have never followed, nor can follow, a clearly defined ascendant line; the passing of this process to each new and higher stage has an intrinsic dialectic and encompasses definite periods during which the premises required for such passing accumulate. The need for such periods derives from the fact that each new stage in the revolutionary struggle is based on major changes of the objective conditions (including changes caused by the results of its preceding development). The "assimilation" of these changes by the working-class movement and the elaboration of appropriate objectives and forms of activity cannot proceed at the same rate as the changes themselves; they constitute a complex and difficult process that includes advances in the ideology, strategy and tactics of the revolutionary working-class movement, development of the social awareness and mentality of the mass of the workers, and accumulation by the movement as a whole of new experience of struggle helping it apprehend new means and possibilities for action. The difficulty of apprehending the new realities may be fairly costly and may lead to "snags" in the development of the revolutionary tendencies of the workers' movement which, of course, are seized upon by the class adversary for his own ends.

It follows from the above that the essential features and place in history of each stage of the working-class movement cannot be

pinpointed by comparing separate, arbitrarily selected "parameters" of the class struggle in the present and preceding stages taken out of the historical context. The frequency and intensity of the most acute forms of class struggle or the degree of influence parties with revolutionary slogans have over the masses cannot serve as absolute and conclusive criteria of the level of the working-class movement if they are taken in isolation from the objective conditions and the sum total of its features and tendencies.

Some of the features and tendencies of the working-class movement in capitalist countries examined in this volume show that its revolutionary potential and capacity for rearranging society along socialist lines were, in effect, increasing. Let us briefly recall a few of them.

First, the existence and strengthening of the socialist world system, its growth into a leading factor of social progress, coupled with the increasingly broad scale of the struggle against imperialism on the world scene, were augmenting the strength of the working-class movement and creating new opportunities for an offensive against capitalist rule.

Second, the aggravation of the general crisis of capitalism, on the one hand, and the greatly higher needs of the workers and other working people, on the other, were accentuating capitalism's basic class antagonism and reducing the chances of its temporary relaxation, thus diminishing the scope for manoeuvre of the governing class. More and more typical in the everyday, "normal", activity of the mass and workers' movement was the struggle for demands that were impracticable in the setting of capitalist omnipotence—demands that envisaged far-reaching social transformations.

Third, with the growth of the working class and of social strata close to it, with the conflict between monopoly capital and all other social strata and classes growing sharper, and with the widening of the working-class movement's sphere of activity, the latter's social-political prestige and leading role in the battle for democratic solutions of the more acute national and international problems, increased. Ever more distinctly, it became a dynamic political force that could safeguard the immediate social and economic interests of the working people, and, indeed, also act in a positive and constructive way on the social and political scene. And as the antimonopoly and anticapitalist trends of the mass movement of the working class gained ground, this ability became an increasingly important factor of success in the fight for vital social changes.

Fourth, the working-class movement had access to an increasingly diverse arsenal of forms and methods of struggle. This made it more effective, better organised, and less dependent on any temporary economic and political factors, or on any other transient phe-

nomena. In many cases, the working-class movement was able to inflict a stinging setback upon the capitalists without resorting to any "extreme", acute forms of struggle that had been essential in the past.

Growth and full identification of all these tendencies, however, like the use to advantage of the objective opportunities for success in the struggle of the working class against capitalist power and the growth of this struggle into a truly revolutionary battle, was inhibited by the surviving contradiction between these opportunities, on the one hand, and the general ideological and political level of the movement and the degree to which it comprehended and mastered its experience, on the other.

We see this contradiction in the fact that despite the growth of the working people's striving for radical social change, and this above all at the level of the mass struggle and mass consciousness, a large segment of the working class had failed to shake off the influence of bourgeois ideology and politics, with its many mass political and professional organisations holding reformist, conciliatory positions vis-à-vis state-monopoly capitalism. That was why the problem of overcoming the split in the movement and furthering its unity on independent class-orientated positions free from bourgeois influences—a problem that is central for the future of the working-class movement and its role of leading progressive public force—was still unsettled.

To overcome the influence on the masses of bourgeois ideology, to overcome their vacillations and their reformist illusions, to show them through their own experience that it is necessary and possible to overthrow monopoly power and to radically restructure society—that is something only the political vanguard of the proletariat, the Communist parties that follow and creatively elaborate on revolutionary theory, can do. The world Communist movement, the Communist parties in capitalist countries, scientifically studied the new developments in the general crisis of capitalism and in the class struggle, and made considerable headway in working out the strategy and tactics of the revolutionary working-class movement. Utilisation of the results of their analysis in some countries secured a considerable strengthening and growth of anti-monopoly and democratic forces, and created a tangible threat to monopoly rule. Some positive changes surfaced in the relationship of the basic currents of the working-class movement: anti-imperialist and anti-monopoly tendencies grew visibly stronger within many Social Democratic parties and reformist trade unions under the effects of the new historical situation and the upswing of the class struggle; in a number of cases, too, various forms of cooperation and joint action sprang up between Communists and Socialists. This is especially

true of international affairs and the struggle for peace and disarmament, for here the views of the Communist and the Social Democratic movements tend to coincide.

It is noted in the new edition of the Programme of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union adopted by the 27th CPSU Congress that "however great might be the divergences between various trends of the working-class movement, they present no obstacle to fruitful and systematic exchange of views, to parallel and even joint actions to remove the war threat, improve the international situation, eliminate the vestiges of colonialism, and uphold the interests and rights of the working people".

There is no denying that the revolutionary forces in the working-class movement of capitalist countries, above all the Communist parties, still have to resolve a multitude of fundamental theoretical as well as concrete practical problems related to the struggle for democracy and socialism in their countries. The difficulties encountered by the working-class and democratic forces in the latter half of the 70s in those capitalist countries where they held the broadest positions, showed quite convincingly that the above problems were intricate and hard to solve. This also applies to the problem of working out a considered programme for safeguarding the economic and social interests of the mass of the people (that the latter would understand and accept) in the setting of the deteriorating crisis of capitalism, and to the problem of simultaneously promoting a consistently class-orientated line in the anti-monopoly struggle, the socialist aims of the working-class movement, and the specific interests, sentiments and traditions of the allies of the working class and, for that matter, those of the more backward segments of the workers themselves. All this is closely related to the need for combining struggle against reformism in principle with promotion of joint action by Communists with parties that are essentially reformist.

Highly topical in terms of theory and practice is the problem of the correlation between consideration for the specificity of current conditions and methods of revolutionary struggle in each capitalist country and the no less necessary reliance on the common regularities, pinpointed by Marxism-Leninism and confirmed by past history, between the national and international aims of the working-class movement, between its activity in its own country and the work done to strengthen its alliance with all the other progressive forces of our time. As we see from past and present experience, absence of consistently clear-cut positions on problems of this sort can be very costly for the revolutionary working-class movement in terms of setbacks, even major defeats, and may lead to loss of a

clear aim and to ideological and political concessions to the class enemy.

Many of the current difficulties encountered by the working-class movement are due to the swift and unprecedentedly substantial changes in the international and national conditions, and the content of its activity. On the whole, however, these changes greatly extend and enrich the experience of revolutionary struggle and tend to augment its strength and its ideological and political maturity. The last few decades of the 20th century will no doubt witness new large-scale class battles, with the working class in capitalist countries gaining new bridgeheads in the struggle for peace, democracy, and socialism. The efforts of the working class to safeguard humankind against a nuclear world war—that deadly peril created by imperialism's aggressive policy—are gaining truly worldwide historical significance. The growing strength of the working-class and communist movement in the capitalist countries and its cooperation with the socialist countries, the peoples of the newly-free countries, and the democratic movements—this is one of the crucial conditions for resolving this acute problem, and for any tangible social progress of mankind.

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